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Letter dated 22 December 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Sweden and Uruguay, as Co-Chairs of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, and in close cooperation with the United Kingdom, hereby transmit a summary note of the meeting held on 5 December 2017 on Afghanistan (see annex).

We would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**
Ambassador

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**
Ambassador

(*Signed*) Elbio **Rosselli**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 22 December 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security: summary of the meeting on Afghanistan, held on 5 December 2017

On 5 December 2017, the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security convened a meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. Members of the Security Council were briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Tadamichi Yamamoto, and the Human Rights Director of UNAMA, Danielle Bell. After the briefings, Council members' questions were focused on the participation of women and the presence of gender expertise in UNAMA itself, the role of and support needed by local women's organizations, including in their interactions with the government at the local and national levels, and the role of religious leaders in facilitating positive cultural change in the country.

The briefers updated Council members on key developments since the meeting held by the Informal Expert Group in November 2016 (see S/2016/1059). For example, the Government has committed itself to implementing its national action plan on women and peace and security in several important forums over the past few months, including as part of its candidacy for membership in the Human Rights Council. The plan, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and involving 20 different ministries, has baselines and targets for 10 of its indicators, while the remaining 29 indicators are still being finalized. Since August 2016, there have been discussions on its budget, but a financing mechanism has not been agreed upon. Participants called upon the Government to be held accountable for implementation of the national action plan on women and peace and security and to not let the discussion about funding excuse poor implementation and weak participation of women in key peace and security processes. At the national level, there are 12 women in the 62-member High Peace Council, an increase from the previous year, and the percentage of women in the provincial peace councils also grew from 9 per cent to over 22 per cent. However, there are only 3 women and 79 men in the joint secretariat of the High Peace Council, and there is a similarly abysmal representation of women among the support staff of these structures. The women and peace and security working group, a forum that regularly brings together Government ministries, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and embassies of donor countries, continues to coordinate in all these matters, including by providing input for the development, over the past year, of a national strategy on countering violent extremism.

The United Nations annual Open Days on Women and Peace and Security consisted of 13 dialogues in the provinces and the capital, which were held in October and November 2017 and were focused on the challenges to women's participation in the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections of 2018. In response to questions about the role of religious leaders, UNAMA noted that they were invited to consultations frequently, and one mullah made a 19-point presentation on how sharia upholds and protects women's rights in elections and wrote and disseminated a paper on this to all mosques in Nangarhar Province, one of the most conservative areas. It is important that the international community continue to engage with and support and promote these voices. In the Government of Afghanistan, there is only one woman minister; another had been proposed alongside the 12 ministerial candidates recently submitted for confirmation by the lower house of parliament, but was rejected. While reforms implemented by the Ministry of the Interior, namely, changes in facilities and

the establishment of policewomen councils and sexual assault complaints mechanisms, have helped to double the number of female recruits to the Afghan National Police, with plans to double it again by 2020, their overall percentage remains low. A similar trend can be found in the Afghan National Army; a record number of female officers graduated in 2016, but women still represent between 1 and 2 per cent of the force, far from the Ministry of Defence's target of reaching 10 per cent. The Government is implementing measures to encourage women to apply to the civil service and to address workplace harassment, and currently 22.5 per cent of civil servants in Afghanistan are women.

The drafts of the family law, the reconciliation of civil disputes law, the mediation regulation and the anti-harassment law — all of them important for women's rights — are currently under consultation between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health and civil society organizations, with inputs and technical advice from the United Nations. The 2015 regulation to eliminate the harassment of women has not been implemented properly, and none of the ministerial or provincial anti-harassment committees are operational yet. In March, the new Penal Code was finally adopted; it includes a progressive and comprehensive definition of rape, defines the crime of *bacha bazi* and codifies war crimes. However, the international community is concerned about the removal of a chapter on violence against women and girls, given that the future of the 2009 Elimination of Violence against Women Law depends on legislators in parliament, where it is often contested and challenged. Briefers reported that there are now special tribunals (*Dewan Khas*) for the elimination of violence against women in 15 provinces and prosecution units for the same purpose in 34 provinces, and that women make up 12 per cent of the workforce of the Supreme Court, 21 per cent of all judges in Afghanistan and 15 per cent of the staff of the Office of the Attorney General.

In 2017, most women casualties were killed during ground engagements because fighting typically takes place in residential areas in suicide and complex attacks, such as the car bombing of 31 May in Kabul, which killed at least 150 people and was one of the deadliest incidents since 2001, and air strikes owing to anti-Government elements taking shelter in residential homes. On at least five separate occasions, UNAMA documented cases of executions of women by Taliban-run courts, and only one verified case of conflict-related sexual violence. However, the family protection centres reported many cases of sexual violence during the first three quarters of the year, including 171 cases of rape. Maternal mortality is the highest in the world, especially among young women and girls, and the closure of clinics owing to the intensification of the fighting, coupled with restrictions on women's movement in many parts of the country, is a serious impediment to their access to health. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, it is estimated that at least one third of girls are married before the age of 18, and in April 2017 the Government of Afghanistan launched the national action plan to eliminate early and child marriages (2017–2021).

Women currently comprise 15.4 per cent of the staff in UNAMA, an increase of 2 per cent from the previous year. This ranges from 34 per cent at the senior level and 30 per cent of international staff to 7 per cent of national staff. The adoption of special measures notwithstanding, the number has not improved because of the low vacancy rates for national posts. Outside of Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat, it is rare for women to be able to work outside the home, and some women do not even tell their families or neighbours that they are working for the United Nations. The latest strategic review recommended the redeployment of the Mission's gender advisory capacity from the Human Rights Service to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in line with Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), and

such redeployment, encompassing one P-5, one P-3 and one national post, has been included in the UNAMA budget submission for 2018.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), as the secretariat of the Informal Expert Group, called upon current and incoming Council members to defend the existing language on women and peace and security in the upcoming mandate negotiations, as well as the provisions for gender expertise in budget negotiations, and to follow up on the implementation of the gender-related recommendations of the technical assessment mission conducted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in Afghanistan in 2017, whose report will be circulated to the Informal Expert Group. UN-Women also called for greater emphasis on the participation of women in actual talks — beyond the number of women in the High Peace Council — and the protection of women's human rights defenders. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict encouraged the United Nations to make full use of Security Council resolution 2331 (2016) in their review of the national strategy to counter violent extremism and to renew efforts to address the under-reporting of conflict-related sexual violence and continue to monitor it.

The Co-Chairs committed themselves to follow up on the recommendations.

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Assessment by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of phase one of the reconfiguration of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution 2363 (2017), supported a two-phase reconfiguration of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in line with the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General (S/2017/437), and requested us to provide, in consultation with UNAMID, a written assessment by 1 January 2018 of phase one of the reconfiguration (1 July-31 December 2017). In line with paragraph 6 of the resolution, the assessment includes an account of the progress in implementing phase one, the impact of reductions in the mission's presence on the areas from which UNAMID has withdrawn, of the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan with UNAMID in ensuring unfettered freedom of movement and removing bureaucratic hindrances, and finally, of whether conditions on the ground remain conducive to further reductions in phase two (31 January-30 June 2018).

2. A joint African Union-United Nations assessment team visited Khartoum and Darfur from 7 to 17 November 2017. It was co-led by the African Union Liaison Office in the Sudan and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and comprised representatives of the African Union Commission, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, as well as of the United Nations Development Programme and the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Darfur, representing, respectively, the United Nations country team and the humanitarian country team. The assessment team held consultations with Government of the Sudan officials and the United Nations country team, visited four Darfur states and the majority of the closed team sites, and met state and local authorities, representatives of the communities of internally displaced persons, and the native administration.

3. The assessment report covers the period from 1 July to 22 December 2017 and provides a conflict analysis, which depicts the current conflict dynamics and drivers in Darfur, as well as the political and humanitarian situation. It assesses the situation in line with the requirements of paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 2363 (2017) and makes recommendations for phase two of the mission's reconfiguration.

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II. Conflict analysis

4. The trends indicated in the special report (S/2017/437) continue as, following its military victory against the rebel movements, the Government of the Sudan is firmly consolidating its control and State authority across Darfur, except for small pockets in the Jebel Marra area. Notably, the deployment of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Darfur in the context of the weapons collection campaign has increased the Government's capability to respond swiftly to security challenges, while creating new dynamics. On the political front, the constitutional review process continues in a measured way on the basis of the outcome of the national dialogue. However, the people of Darfur have not yet fully benefited from the political and the legislative provisions stipulated in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as its implementation remains lacking, despite the inclusion of the Doha Document in the Constitution.

A. Conflict dynamics

Fighting between the Government of the Sudan and armed groups

5. No major confrontations have been reported between the Government of the Sudan and Darfur rebel groups since 1 July. The incursion of Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and Sudan Liberation Movement/Transitional Council (SLM/TC), a splinter faction of Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW), from Libya and South Sudan into North and East Darfur, in late May and early June 2017, did not result in any sustained presence in Darfur. According to UNAMID, reported clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces/Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and a suspected dormant cell of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Birkat Saira area, 25 km east of Saraf Omra, on 22 November in the context of the weapons collection campaign, resulted in the capture of 16 rebels and the disbanding of some 130 JEM elements. Clashes were also reported at Mijelid village, 46 km north-east of Shaeria, on 29 November between Government armed forces and an unidentified armed group suspected of coming from South Sudan, without any reported casualties. Neither SLA/MM nor the Gibril Ibrahim faction of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM/Gibril) have a significant armed presence in Darfur or the Sudan.

6. The area of operations of SLA/AW in Darfur continues to be limited to pockets of Jebel Marra and its effectiveness is reduced by further fragmentations, infighting or involvement in acts of banditry. The areas under the control of SLA/AW and Government armed forces have not changed since the special report was published. No engagement has been reported between Government armed forces and SLA/AW since the clashes of 10 June in the village of Thur, 15 km south of Nertiti, triggered by an alleged theft of livestock belonging to the Nawaybah clan of Northern Rizeigat by SLA/AW. On 21 October, clashes were recorded between SLA/AW elements loyal to the movement and a splinter group, in Feina village, northeast of Kass, which was the fifth incident of this nature since April 2017. Furthermore, in early November, SLA/AW elements stole Ereigat/Rizeigat cattle, creating tensions in the area around Thur, and on 22 November, suspected SLA/AW elements fired at a commercial truck near Golo, Central Darfur, killing one civilian and injuring six civilians.

7. While there is no agreement on a permanent ceasefire, the Government and the armed groups continue to extend temporary cessations of hostilities. In October, the Government extended its unilateral cessation of hostilities until 31 December 2017. In a joint declaration on 30 November, SLA/MM, JEM/Gibril and SLM/TC extended their unilateral cessation of hostilities for two months, from 30 November 2017 to 31 January 2018.

8. Conflicts in the neighbouring countries continue to provide an opportunity for some of the rebel groups that have lost their foothold in Darfur to retreat, resupply and train. SLA/MM is currently estimated to maintain several hundred fighters, with some 150 vehicles, in Libya, where they are engaged in mercenary activities, while a few hundred JEM fighters with some 60 to 80 vehicles are still located in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, South Sudan. In the incursion during May and June 2017, the rebel groups who infiltrated from Libya used heavy weapons, including armoured vehicles, for the first time.

9. Rapid Support Force units continue to monitor the northern borders of Darfur, while the joint Sudan-Chad border monitoring force has been effective in creating stability in the western border areas. No progress has been made to date towards establishing similar arrangements to cover the Darfur-Central African Republic border. However, following a meeting in Khartoum on 1 and 2 November 2017, the President of the Sudan, Omar Hassan al-Bashir and the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, undertook not to harbour or to provide support to their respective countries' rebel movements, and decided to reactivate the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and its associated sub-mechanisms, including the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, which is part of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Militia groups, weapons collection campaign and impact on security

10. In the Government's efforts to consolidate control and to expand its authority across Darfur, two factors are playing a key role, both contributing to new dynamics as regards security, namely, the deployment of a sizeable contingent of RSF and the conduct of a weapons collection campaign. The former has de facto put in motion a consolidation process of the militia groups under the umbrella of RSF, while the latter is reportedly creating conditions to further improve security in Darfur beyond the state capitals, while reshaping the political landscape. Despite the overall decrease in the number of acts of banditry and criminality, the police force and the rule of law institutions have limited capacity in remote locations and areas of return for the internally displaced communities.

11. The recent deployment of RSF to Darfur in the context of the weapons collection campaign has initiated a process of bringing the different militia groups under its effective control and authority. Although total figures of deployment are not made public, except for the announced arrival of 10,000 RSF in North Darfur, UNAMID estimates that some 18,000 RSF have been deployed across the five Darfur states. Given past RSF involvement in counter-insurgency operations and reports of arbitrary arrests, harassment and rape associated with its elements, as well as the fact that most of its units are recruited from the Arab Rizeigat tribe, several communities of internally displaced persons remain apprehensive regarding its presence and intentions.

12. In the past three months, RSF has increasingly asserted itself as an undisputed security force in Darfur, particularly through its central role in the weapons collection campaign. On 23 October, RSF pursued the Savanna militia group out of Kutum town in North Darfur, and on 30 October, clashed with them in Shaeria in East Darfur. On 10 November, after clashes in the west of Korma town, they captured the leader of the group, Abdallah Rizkallah, along with nine other members. Likewise, following the public refusal of Musa Hilal to integrate his border guard units with RSF in August, clashes took place on 21 September on the Sudan-Egypt-Libya border between RSF and the border guards, which resulted in the killing of 17 of the border guard elements, who were accused of human trafficking and illegal migration, as well as two RSF troops. On 26 November, RSF units were reportedly ambushed by Musa Hilal border guards while transporting some criminal elements from Saraf Omra to

Kabkabiyah, North Darfur. In response to the ensuing fighting, which resulted in the killing of 14 RSF, including one of their senior commanders, and nine militia, RSF arrested Musa Hilal, his three sons and members of his militia in his stronghold of Misteriya (30 km south-west of Kabkabiyah) and transported them to Khartoum. Given Hilal's profile as tribal leader of the Mahamid clan of the Northern Rizeigat, head of the Sudanese Revolutionary Awakening Council (SRAC) and former Janjaweed leader, the event has sent a strong message to other militia groups in Darfur.

13. The response of other tribal militias to RSF deployment and the weapons collection campaign in all the other Darfur states is observed as being muted. Incorporated into different auxiliary units of the Government forces, such as the border guards, Popular Defence Forces and Central Reserve Police, they have, in the main, complied with the campaign or joined RSF. As many of them were involved in the past in fighting against the rebel groups, the positive impact on security is widely appreciated by the local authorities and the tribal leaders. In this context, the weapons collection campaign has taken centre stage in all five Darfur states.

14. The weapons collection campaign has not only changed the balance of forces in Darfur's security environment by solidifying the position of RSF, it is also gradually creating the conditions for new political realities to take shape, amid mixed reactions from the local communities and communities of internally displaced persons. Set in motion by a presidential decree in early 2017, and initiated on 6 August by the Second Vice-President of the Sudan and chair of the High Committee for the Collection of Weapons, Hassabo Mohamed Abdul-Rahman, the Government's national plan on disarmament is underpinned by two pillars: tightening border control points with the neighbouring countries and undertaking the weapons collection in two phases, namely, a voluntary stage, followed by a "search and confiscate" (mandatory) phase. The campaign was launched simultaneously throughout five Darfur states and three Kordofan states, which in the Government's assessment have the highest level of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Those in possession of weapons, ammunition, explosives or unregistered vehicles have been requested to hand them over to government security institutions, with immediate effect. Any resistance will be treated as a violation of the law and dealt with in accordance with the Sudan's criminal law, the Public Safety Act and the Arms, Ammunition and Explosives Act of 1986.

15. Although the conclusions of the national dialogue and the recommendations of the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation process call for the implementation of a civilian disarmament campaign, the Darfur rebel movements and their former foes expressed strong opposition to the collection of weapons from the very beginning. Musa Hilal denounced the campaign while rejecting the incorporation of his border guards into RSF. SLA/MM and JEM/Gibril did the same within days, by calling for a comprehensive security sector reform and for putting the process on hold until a comprehensive peace agreement was reached. SLA/AW, welcoming the position of Hilal, offered to work with him in rejecting the process.

16. While there are no consolidated figures on its outcome, to date, no significant issues have been recorded during the weapons collection in West, Central, South and East Darfur states, which entered the second phase, mandatory collection, in the first half of November. The campaign is conducted by a joint force composed mainly of the national armed forces and RSF, assisted by Government of the Sudan police and the Central Reserve Police. The reported numbers of collected weapons vary between 3,200 during the voluntary phase in South Darfur, to about 4,700 in East Darfur, while expectations in West Darfur are to reach some 14,000 items. Overall, while the initiation of the campaign was received with mixed reactions and scepticism, the local authorities and tribal leaders consider that it has increased security among the

communities. UNAMID welcomed it as a positive step by the Government to consolidate the prevailing relative peace and stability in Darfur, while engaging the authorities on reported concerns over non-respect for the rule of law and violations of human rights associated with the conduct of the campaign. On 1 December, the President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno commended the ongoing campaign in the Sudan as having boosted security in neighbouring Chad.

17. Some communities of internally displaced persons are apprehensive that the campaign might trigger a deterioration of their security conditions and have requested the mission to monitor the process. Although there have been reports of joint government forces entering the camps for internally displaced persons during the mandatory stage, such as in Kalma camp in South Darfur on 2 November, Hamidiya camp in Zalingei, Central Darfur, on 16 November, and Abu Zar camp in West Darfur on 20 November, the collection process went without incident in the last two camps and a UNAMID team observed the process. In Nyala, South Darfur, given the complex nature of the settlement, the Government requested that UNAMID undertake the weapons collections inside Kalma camp. Following two meetings held by the Joint Special Representative, Jeremiah Nyamane Kingsley Mamabolo, with the Second Vice-President of the Sudan and the Governor of South Darfur, on 9 and 14 November, an agreement was reached to establish a trilateral committee, with the participation of UNAMID, the Government and the representatives of internally displaced persons, to conduct the collection of weapons in the camp. On 22 November, the mission's team in South Darfur reached an agreement whereby the voluntary collection of weapons in Kalma camp would be undertaken under the supervision of state authorities and the leadership of internally displaced persons in Kalma, with UNAMID monitoring the process, which started on 10 December without incident.

Intercommunal conflicts

18. Intercommunal conflicts over land and natural resources remain one of the main sources of violence in Darfur, but since mid-2015, the number of such conflicts has continued to decrease significantly. There were three intercommunal clashes, resulting in 45 fatalities, for the period from 15 October to 15 December, compared to eight clashes, resulting in 19 fatalities, reported between 15 August and 15 October, and 10 clashes, with 74 fatalities, for the period from 6 June to 15 August 2017. The overall decline is attributed to the joint efforts of the state governments, Government armed forces and the Sudanese police forces at the local level, as well as UNAMID support for the mediation efforts and, more recently, to the weapons collection campaign, which has visibly limited access to small arms among civilians.

19. A number of conflicts persist, as the issues at their origin remain unaddressed in a sustainable manner. The conflict between the Zaghawa and the Rizeigat in West Darfur over cattle and camels flared up again between 16 and 19 October, resulting in the killing of 16 Zaghawa and 11 Rizeigat. It was brought under control with the intervention of the Sudan-Chad joint border forces and the state government with the assistance of UNAMID. Intercommunal tensions over natural resources in the areas of Buram and Graida, South Darfur, continue between the Salamat, Habbaniya and Fallata communities. On 20 July, armed Fallata killed five Salamat, 16 km south-west of Graida, while they were moving with their livestock towards Nyala. In East Darfur, the conflict between the Rizeigat and the Ma'aliya over land ownership and natural resources resulted in the death of 39 Rizeigat and 2 Ma'aliya, after a series of clashes between 21 and 24 July. The state government deployed security forces on 24 July and days later, Government armed forces disarmed and arrested several civilians and traditional leaders, which was followed by the dismissal of the native administration of both communities for their failure to contain the conflict. In North Darfur, tensions

between the Northern Rizeigat and Beni Hussein over the control of the Jebel Amir goldmines remain latent, as the grievances of the latter have not been addressed.

Conflict trends in the areas from which the mission has withdrawn

20. The security situation in the area of the Muhajiriyah team site, in East Darfur, has remained calm, mainly as a result of the measures taken by the Government security institutions, including the deployment of troops in the buffer zone to curb the protracted intercommunal clashes between the Southern Rizeigat and the Ma'aliya. The mediation efforts of native administrations, with the support of UNAMID, have also contributed to the reduction of tensions. From being a mobility corridor for the armed movements in the past, Muhajiriyah is currently under the tight control of Government forces. The deployment of Sudanese police in remote locations has contributed to a 40 per cent reduction in criminality in the state. East Darfur currently provides shelter to more than 80,000 South Sudanese refugees, who are assisted by humanitarian actors.

21. The areas around the Edd al-Fursan and Tulus team sites, in South Darfur, have not been prone to armed conflict or intercommunal violence, except for the seasonal clashes between the Fallata and the nomad communities during the migration/farming season. The Government has launched several reconciliation initiatives between the tribes in the area, including in Shataya, where the conflict started in 2003. The departure of the mission from those areas, however, poses challenges for the monitoring of cross-border activities along the borders with the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

22. No reports of belligerent activities or intercommunal clashes have been received from the areas around the Foro Burunga and Habila team sites, in West Darfur. While in the past, insecurity in those areas was related to the proliferation of small arms and criminal activities, the recent weapons collection campaign and the robust deployment of the Government forces have resulted in improved security. The joint Sudan-Chad patrols along the border have had a visible deterrent effect on criminal activities and the circulation of small weapons in the area.

23. The situation around the Al-Malihah, Mellit, Tine, Abu Shuk, Zamzam and Um Kaddadah team sites is relatively calm and there are currently no records of any armed conflict and/or intercommunal conflict-related incidents. The case involving the killing of an African Medob Central Reserve Police officer by a member of RSF on 28 August 2017 was described as an isolated incident, which was followed by the subsequent arrest of the perpetrator and mediation by the Government. Following the signing of a tripartite agreement between the governments of Chad and the Sudan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in May 2017, Sudanese refugees currently residing in Chad are expected to return to North, Central and West Darfur, starting in 2018. The deployment of Sudanese police in all 15 localities of North Darfur and the ongoing weapons collection campaign have reportedly decreased the levels of criminality. The borders with neighbouring countries are controlled by the Government armed forces and RSF, whose tasks include stopping illegal migration and smuggling.

B. Political developments

Darfur peace process

24. Progress towards achieving a negotiated political settlement to the conflict remains elusive. While the parties proclaim their intention to continue negotiations, preconditions, a lack of vision and further fragmentation of the movements mar any tangible outcomes. On 20 August, informal consultations with SLA/MM and

JEM/Gibril in Berlin on ways to revive the peace process resulted in both groups maintaining their rejection of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as the basis for political negotiations, reiterating its shortcomings in relation to security arrangements, the protection of civilians, compensation, land ownership and justice. On 27 August, a breakaway faction of JEM, led by Abubakar Hamid and Souleyman Jamous, accepted the disarmament proposal made by the Government. On 13 October, the leadership council of one of the factions of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) elected Minni Minawi as its new chairman, during its general conference in Paris. On 16 October, it was reported that the Sudan Liberation Army led by Nour al-Din Zurg (SLA/Zurg) had suspended the peace agreement it signed with the Government in 2016, over accusations of slow implementation.

25. In Darfur, new cabinet posts were announced by state governors between 9 June and 16 July, in order to accommodate some signatories to the National Dialogue document. Preference in the distribution of posts in Darfur state parliaments and cabinets was given to the smaller movements and factions of the non-signatory movements as compared to traditional opposition parties. Those changes notwithstanding, the National Congress Party remains the dominant force in the political landscape and some of the signatory movements have openly expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of agreements that they had signed and have threatened to withdraw their support.

Implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

26. There has been limited tangible progress since the letter dated 30 August 2017 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council on the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (S/2017/747). On 11 September, in a meeting with the head of the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office, Magdi Khalafalla, the President of the Sudan gave assurances regarding the speedy structuring and revitalization of the commissions tasked with implementing the provisions of the Doha Document. On 25 October, the Second Vice-President organized a follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Document, the status of the Darfur Commissions and the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund, and Government support to the Sudanese refugees who have returned from Chad to Darfur. According to Government sources, the staffing needs of the Commissions have recently been addressed, and the Commissioners have been appointed at the ministerial level, under the Presidency. The Darfur Fund has completed 650 of 1,070 projects, and the Government is approaching the donor community for additional funding.

27. The Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation continues to draw the support of most stakeholders in Darfur, as it aims to provide space for ordinary citizens to discuss an inclusive political process in Darfur. Although the non-signatory movements have not made any public pronouncements against the process, they have not yet publicly endorsed it. To date, consultations have been completed in all 68 localities in Darfur, with the support of UNAMID, and a review conference took place on 30 October to take stock of the process and share the outcomes. Preparations for Darfur state-level consultations with refugees and the diaspora are under way. Channels need to be identified for including the outcomes of the Consultation in the constitutional review process.

Impact of the lifting of sanctions by the United States of America

28. The revocation by the United States of America of economic sanctions against the Sudan and the Government of the Sudan as of 12 October created a new impetus and space for political engagement, in recognition of the Government's sustained positive actions towards maintaining a cessation of hostilities in conflict areas in the

Sudan and improving humanitarian access throughout the Sudan. Tangible economic dividends, however, may take time to materialize. The lifting of the sanctions has visibly improved the engagement of the state actors in Darfur with the international community, while generating a sense of optimism among the local communities. However, JEM/Gibril and SLA/MM were of the view that the lifting of sanctions should have been conditioned on tangible progress in the peace process. Sanctions relating to blocking the property of persons in connection with the conflict in Darfur have not been lifted and the Sudan remains on the United States list of State sponsors of terrorism. Those sanctions continue to have an impact on the ability of the Government of the Sudan to benefit from debt relief and other international development assistance.

III. Progress in implementing phase one

A. Peacebuilding

29. The Darfur state governments and UNAMID are working to achieve the peacebuilding component of the two-pronged approach, adopted by the Security Council in its resolution 2363 (2017). Nearly all the government officials whom the assessment team met requested development projects to support the fledgling peace in Darfur, even as they welcomed the closure of the mission's sites. To date, however, only the state governments of North and South Darfur have submitted their stabilization plans for support by UNAMID and the international community, while discussions are at an advanced stage in East Darfur State. In addition, the assessment team noticed that the activities of the Commissions of the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office (residual commissions of the former Darfur Regional Authority) at the state level were limited, owing to shortage of funding and staffing.

30. At the mission level, a framework of engagement with state authorities, based on national ownership and rooted in the Doha Document and the findings of the Dialogue and Consultation, was recently prepared in line with the mission's mandate, with specific attention to the immediate need to support the police and help to build the rule of law institutions, while continuing to protect civilians and mediate intercommunal conflict. The next steps include a dialogue to identify specific areas of intervention in each state in order to reach agreement with the Darfur state authorities. The mission needs to finalize the state-specific stabilization plans in cooperation with the country team and state authorities by 31 January 2018, which requires, at the same time, the strengthening of the mission's offices in the states of Darfur. A major challenge remains the financing of United Nations country team activities on peacebuilding in support of the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

31. With the objective of addressing medium to longer-term needs related to land tenure and land use in particular, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focuses on the implementation of the Darfur Development Strategy through 12 foundational activities and short-term activities projects co-implemented by United Nations entities in collaboration with line ministries.

B. Peacekeeping and the Jebel Marra task force

32. The peacekeeping aspect of the two-pronged approach is based on the establishment of the Jebel Marra task force, in line with paragraph 53 of the special report (S/2017/437), to include nine existing team sites and a temporary operating base to be established in Golo. The task force is to be established during phase one

and operationalized in phase two of the reconfiguration. UNAMID formalized the task force concept of operations on 7 December 2017, by defining its organizational and operational structure, with headquarters in Zalingei. As its area of operations will cover team sites in three Darfur states, a coordination mechanism has been established to facilitate political and military activities and liaise with respective state authorities.

33. UNAMID has not yet received official notification of permission to establish a temporary operating base in Golo, as requested in paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 2363 (2017). The mission sent a note verbale to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 20 July 2017, followed by a detailed concept of operations for the site, which was transmitted on 22 August 2017. The Joint Special Representative also raised the matter with the First Vice-President and Prime Minister of the Sudan, Bakri Hassan Salih, on 30 August 2017, and followed up with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10 October. The issue was discussed during the African Union-United Nations-Government of the Sudan tripartite meeting held in New York on 22 September 2017. On 13 December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the mission that it had identified the land for the site and that an official communication on its allocation would follow.

C. Reconfiguration of the military component

34. The mission's military component currently stands at 11,461 personnel, (reduced from the previous level of 15,845) against an authorized strength of 11,395 at the end of phase one. This includes a rear party of 109 and 454 military staff officers and military experts on mission out of an authorized 520. As the reconfiguration process is still under way, the force is operating from five sectors, namely Sector North with two infantry battalions, Sector West with one infantry battalion, Sector Central, including the Jebel Marra task force, with four infantry battalions, Sector South with two infantry battalions and Sector East with one infantry battalion. In total, the force is operating from 24 team sites and two temporary operating bases. Ten military team sites have already been handed over to the respective state governments. It is foreseen that the area of operation will be converted into a two-sector set-up by the end of phase two, namely Sector 1 covering the Jebel Marra area and Sector 2 covering the rest of Darfur, with the mission's main effort remaining on its peacekeeping posture in the Jebel Marra Sector.

35. The implementation of phase one of the reconfiguration entailed the repatriation of three infantry battalions from Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Pakistan, along with a level II hospital from Mongolia, and the non-deployment of one infantry battalion each from Pakistan and the United Republic of Tanzania, which had previously been expected to deploy to the mission. This reduced the total number of infantry battalions to 11 from the 16 previously mandated, of which 14 were deployed. The reconfiguration process of the military component was completed by the end of October 2017.

36. The process was undertaken within a much shorter period than anticipated, which had a negative effect on the further planning and execution of the reconfiguration. The assessment team noted that some unplanned repatriations were executed, including that of the level II hospital, which also affected the morale of troops and affected operations within the mission. The issue of repatriation of enablers was also considered during the assessment, and it was concluded that owing to operational requirements, all current enablers, namely, aviation, medical and engineering enablers, should be retained, the latter in view of their continued requirement for development projects in both future sectors (heavy component with explosive ordnance disposal capability for the Jebel Marra task force and lighter component for stabilization tasks).

37. Kalma is one of the seven team sites that will be required to be handed over to formed police units during phase two. As a result of the disarmament campaign, the security situation in Kalma camp, a highly politicized stronghold of SLA/AW, has again deteriorated, after a couple of years of relative calm. As noted above, the Government approached UNAMID for support with the disarmament of the camp. It is therefore recommended that the handover of the site to the formed police units be completed towards the end of phase two of the reconfiguration, by which time the weapons collection campaign would have been completed.

D. Reconfiguration of the police component

38. The mission's police component currently stands at 2,666 United Nations police against an authorized strength of 2,888 at the end of phase one (reduced from the previous level of 3,403, which comprised 1,583 individual police officers and 13 formed police units). It consists of 1,118 individual police officers and 1,548 formed police unit elements deployed in mission headquarters and five sector headquarters, as well as at 24 team sites. In line with the reconfiguration plan, UNAMID police ceased operations at 11 team sites.

39. The repatriation of two formed police units from Bangladesh and Senegal was completed in September, at the end of their rotation cycle, while one formed police unit was redeployed from El Fasher to Umm Barru and another from Ed Daein to Shaeria to provide security to team sites vacated by the military component. There were concerns among UNAMID staff in the sectors about the capacity of the formed police units to fully take over from the departing military in some locations.

40. The Sudanese police have re-established its presence in all 11 locations where UNAMID has closed team sites. The security situation in the state capitals is currently assessed as being stable, owing to the increased presence of the Sudanese police, as well as the Government's operations against the rebel movements and its ongoing weapons collection campaign. Of note is the fact that the Sudanese police is also required to keep its firearms in armouries during the weapons collection campaign.

41. The operational activities of the police component, in particular patrolling, have decreased by an average of 25 to 30 per cent, and is currently at between 70 and 75 patrols per day, which also reflects the patrols conducted from the closed team sites. In order to allow for the future increased involvement of individual police officers in capacity-building activities and the involvement of formed police units in static security-related activities at the team sites, the mission is planning to merge some sectors in order to decrease the number of officers deployed in support functions, while redeploying them to patrolling in camps for internally displaced persons.

E. Closure of team sites

42. A total of 11 team sites were closed and handed over to the Government of the Sudan between 8 August and 20 October 2017, namely El Fasher/Zamzam, El Fasher/Abu Shuk, Al-Malihah, Um Kaddadah, Tine and Mellit (Sector North); Habila and Foro Burunga (Sector West); Edd al-Fursan and Tulus (Sector South); and Muhajiriyah (Sector East). The assessment team visited nine locations, including Golo. The state authorities confirmed that the sites will be used for public services and to the benefit of local communities, with Mellit, Um Kaddadah and Habila having been allocated to the College of Agriculture, while Al-Malihah and Tulus, which are currently used by the security forces, to be converted into a school and a local community centre. The assessment team witnessed that all but one of the team sites

(Um Kaddadah) are presently occupied by the joint forces for the weapons collection campaign.

43. The state governments cooperated in the smooth handover of the sites through establishing joint committees. While the state authorities have been supportive of the drawdown process, they have high expectations and have formulated additional demands towards the mission and the United Nations country team related to development activities, especially in the areas of health and education.

F. Civilian staffing review

44. The special report (S/2017/437) called for a civilian staffing review of UNAMID, which was endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2363 (2017), with a view to ensuring that staffing levels are adjusted to implement the revised mandate. Given the magnitude of the change in the number of uniformed personnel and the revised substantive focus of the mission, the staffing review concentrated on commensurate reductions in civilian personnel and the alignment of structures to the mission mandate. A reduction of 558 positions has been included in the revised 2017/18 budget submission that is under consideration by the Fifth Committee, and a further reduction of 302 positions is being considered for the 2018/19 budget cycle.

45. The mission should find ways to address the needs of staff in the team sites, since most of the support services are already concentrated at the level of mission headquarters and the sector field offices, leaving the team sites dependent on short missions from technical experts to resolve maintenance and repair issues for critical services. Further staff reductions need to be implemented primarily at mission headquarters and then in the sector field offices. In addition, in view of the low percentage of women in the mission (29 per cent among staff in the international category, and 13 per cent among staff in the national category), the forthcoming comparative review process methodology and criteria should ensure that women encumbering positions in sections and/or units with low representation levels of women are not adversely affected through the streamlining exercise.

IV. Impact of the reconfiguration

46. The assessment in Darfur was undertaken within a few weeks of the closure of team sites, which only allowed for a preliminary analysis of the impact of UNAMID reconfiguration. While no serious adverse impact was noted during the field mission and during the subsequent weeks, it is clear that it is too early to make a definite determination of the impact of the closure of team sites on the population. The analysis below gives a general assessment of the situation, pointing to possible risks as they were conveyed to the assessment team.

A. Humanitarian and protection challenges

Communities of internally displaced persons and humanitarian assistance

47. While the security situation has visibly improved, the humanitarian indicators illustrate a continuing emergency situation, with 2.7 million people displaced, of whom 2.1 million are in need of assistance across Darfur, and more than half a million children face severe acute malnutrition. Approximately 1.6 million displaced people live in a range of camps and settlements in close proximity to urban or peri-urban centres, with many of them displaced since 2003 and, for multiple reasons, unable or unwilling to return to their places of origin. Approximately 533,000 persons have

returned voluntarily to their places of origin across the Sudan since 2003, and UNHCR began the repatriation of Sudanese refugees from the Central African Republic on 12 December. Nevertheless, the lack of security, basic services and sustainable livelihoods in return areas, as well as issues related to land ownership have become major impediments to return, as stressed in meetings the assessment team had with representatives of internally displaced persons.

48. Overall, no additional displacements have taken place during the period of the assessment in the vicinity of the closed team sites and their closure to date has not resulted in the slowdown of humanitarian or development programme delivery. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service has weekly flights to Golo and Rockero, the main challenge being the poor road conditions. The delivery of humanitarian and recovery projects/programming is continuing, without hindrance and without access challenges.

49. In the above context, the humanitarian community is facing two main challenges. The first concerns the large proportions of people affected by displacement and other vulnerable residents who are facing a situation where humanitarian assistance cannot meet their chronic and long-term needs, which remain largely unaddressed owing to limited investment in human resources and physical infrastructure. As part of a broader durable solutions strategy for Darfur, consideration needs to be given to a pragmatic, longer-term approach that provides assistance to those long-term displaced persons located in urban or peri-urban areas in Darfur. The second challenge relates to the depletion of natural resources in the context of desertification and continued population growth, paired with persistent pockets of insecurity and weak institutions, which are unable to change the status quo. The situation calls for appropriate interventions so as to break the cycle of poverty and instability and offer the population longer-term, pragmatic solutions.

Protective environment

50. The improvement in the overall security situation has not translated into a commensurate improvement in the situation of human rights, which is further exacerbated by the continued state of emergency. Violations and abuses such as sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions and the denial of free expression and association persist with impunity. There were 149 cases of human rights violations, involving 385 victims, documented between July and October 2017, compared to 168 cases, involving 343 victims, during the same period in 2016. In addition, 13 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence were verified between July and September 2017. Although, over the course of the assessment period, there was a fluctuation and, to a certain extent, a decrease in the number of human rights violations reported, the number of cases of sexual and gender-based violence in the form of rape and attempted rape is consistent. There has been, however, a gradual increase in the number of investigations initiated by the judicial institutions.

51. During the period between 15 June and 15 August, there were 94 cases of human rights violations, involving 204 victims, including 22 children, and 27 cases of rape; investigations were initiated in 14 cases. During the period between 15 August and 15 October there were 72 cases of human rights violations, involving 253 victims, including 16 children, and 27 cases of rape; investigations were initiated in 17 cases. Over the past two months, there were 56 cases of human rights violations and abuses, involving 123 victims, including 18 children, and seven cases of rape; investigations were initiated in 26 cases. The country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 43 incidents of grave violations, involving 57 children, between July and September 2017, compared to 48 incidents in the first quarter and 33 incidents in the second quarter of 2017. In this context, police in West Darfur State have stepped up

investigations, leading to several arrests, and have given human rights teams access to prisons; in Central Darfur State, investigations began on a case of sexual and gender-based violence in September and the perpetrators were arrested; in North Darfur State, the Government deployed the military to protect civilians against militia groups and deployed prosecutors and judges to the Fato Barno area to facilitate land returns and the resolution of land ownership disputes; and in South Darfur State, with the support of UNAMID, the Government has re-established rule of law and security institutions in Shataya locality, creating a positive impact in terms of stabilization and an increase in the number of internally displaced persons returning to the area.

52. The closure of team sites across Darfur has created a gap in early warning mechanisms, and access of human rights teams to those locations and their capacity to verify human rights violations continue to be limited. This is expected to result in the underreporting of incidents. Capacity-building and work for the promotion of human rights is also affected by logistical constraints. UNAMID is looking into alternative ways to address these issues, including the creation of mobile teams to operate through several sectors. There has been no progress in the negotiations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with the Government of the Sudan on a possible technical cooperation programme. In the meantime, the mission has finalized plans for the conduct of night patrols in the 47 camps for internally displaced persons, which were identified as a protection priority during the mapping of settlements of internally displaced persons in Darfur. It is crucial, however, to enhance the capacity of the state authorities and other local actors to effectively carry out the functions relating to the protection of civilians, especially internally displaced persons, and the promotion of human rights.

Challenges to the rule of law

53. Across Darfur, the presence and capacity of justice and corrections institutions remains limited. While the Government's efforts to restore the presence of the criminal justice chain, through the deployment of judges, prosecutors and police personnel, are to be commended, rural areas are severely affected by the absence of institutions. In the above context, while it is observed that so far, the drawdown of UNAMID from several team sites has had no adverse impact on the functioning of the judicial and prison institutions, its impact is mostly evident in the area of implementation and monitoring of rule of law projects, advisory support to prison institutions in Mellit and Um Kaddadah, legal aid services and the provision of logistical support to national counterparts. In the absence of reliable UNAMID air transportation, access by land for mission staff remains challenging, owing to the mission's security posture and restrictions by government security institutions.

54. The joint programme for the rule of law and human rights in Darfur of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and the Government of the Sudan is funded at only 14 per cent of requirements, despite the recent contribution by the Government of Canada of $961,391, in addition to initial funding at a similar level provided by UNAMID and UNDP. The mission's footprint in Darfur and its logistical support are important to the success of the programme in remote areas of the region. The mobilization of additional resources to increase the country team's capacity in Darfur remains critical for creating the necessary impact of the programme on the ground.

B. Capacities of the United Nations country team

55. As indicated in the special report (S/2017/437), the United Nations country team continues to face the same financial and staffing resource challenges in Darfur. The humanitarian needs are currently funded at 45 per cent for 2017, whereas

development activities are funded at a much lower level. Most members of the country team were of the view that it was too early to draw a conclusion regarding the impact of UNAMID drawdown and reconfiguration on its ability to assume a larger role in Darfur. They proposed the finalization of a system-wide Darfur fundraising strategy as an immediate measure to address funding gaps for development programmes. From the security perspective, country team members are adopting alternative solutions to UNAMID escorts, by calling upon the Sudanese police, mainly in areas not affected by conflict, outside the Jebel Marra region.

V. Cooperation of the Government of the Sudan

56. During phase one of the drawdown and reconfiguration of UNAMID, the Government of the Sudan has been very cooperative in facilitating the repatriation of contingents and the timely closure and hand-over of the team sites. To this end, committees were established at the state level to coordinate the work of the relevant government agencies and engage with UNAMID and the concerned parties in the process of handover of assets. While expressing appreciation for the work of UNAMID in fostering security over the years, several local officials and tribal leaders requested more development-oriented projects. In the same context, they were of the view that a number of assets, in particular generators, should have been donated to the communities.

57. The operating environment for the movement of humanitarian personnel across Darfur has been reliable and open since the revised directives and procedures for humanitarian action were outlined by the Humanitarian Aid Commission in December 2016. Humanitarian actors have scaled up operations in Golo and surrounding areas since July 2016, by providing health, education, water, nutrition, food security and protection assistance, with the participation of an increased number of non-governmental organization partners. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service has weekly flights to Golo and Rockero in Central Darfur State, as well as to Sortony, Tawilah, Shangil Tobaya and Kabkabiyah in North Darfur. In South Darfur's eastern Jebel Marra, areas of Menawashei, Belle el-Sereif and Layba are easily accessible by road, as is Kass locality.

58. However, on four occasions, UNAMID patrols were not allowed to visit areas from which the mission had withdrawn during phase one. Most recently, they were twice denied access for security reasons, before being allowed to proceed on 6 December to Misteriya, the location of clashes between RSF and armed elements affiliated to Musa Hilal.

Bureaucratic hindrances

59. Despite improvements in the request-issuance ratio, the mission continues to experience some difficulties in obtaining visas for international staff. During phase one of the reconfiguration, the Government granted 1,466 visas for UNAMID, which constituted 84 per cent of the requests. Those visas included 875 for military and police personnel and 43 for international staff. The non-issuance of visas affects the Human Rights Section of UNAMID in particular, where the vacancy rate remains at 44 per cent. A total of 42 visa requests for United Nations police remain pending with the authorities, leading to an increased vacancy rate that is slowly affecting the mission's ability to undertake stabilization efforts.

60. While the Government is progressively releasing food ration containers from Port Sudan, the release of 50 shipments of United Nations-owned equipment and contingent-owned equipment remains pending between customs and the Ministry of Finance, two of which have been pending since 2015.

VI. Conclusions

A. Assessment of conditions for implementing phase two

61. While it is still early to reach conclusions on the full impact of the reduction and reconfiguration in areas where UNAMID team sites have closed, it is important to note that no adverse effects have been reported so far. Security, as reported by all our interlocutors, has significantly improved, and the constitution of security committees by the five state governors, with membership from across all security services, has instituted effective coordination to ensure unity of purpose. In addition, the weapons collection campaign is overall a positive development that should also reduce the level of armed violence, if pursued to its logical conclusion. The campaign should also contribute to the improvement of the conditions necessary for the return of internally displaced persons to their original homes. The campaign will need to be carefully undertaken in Kalma camp, pursuing the plan agreed by the trilateral committee between the state government, internally displaced persons and UNAMID.

B. Adjustments arising from issues emerging during phase one

62. Owing to the security situation in Kalma camp for internally displaced persons and the resulting operational requirements, some adjustments in the reconfiguration plan for phase two will be made to enable continued military coverage for Kalma camp until the end of phase two. This would allow the formed police units to take full control gradually, once conditions improve.

63. The redeployment of formed police units in phase two, from military to police/civilian-only team sites, will require enhanced synchronization with the repositioning of the military component of UNAMID, as well as coordination with communities, government and other actors working in settings with formed police units, so that their expectations are managed. Furthermore, in view of the reduction in the number of individual police officers from mission and Sector headquarters, the assessment team supports the merger for administrative purposes of Sector West with Sector Centre, and Sector South with Sector East, while giving careful consideration to the critical elements of command, control, coordination and communication structures.

64. As the mission moves into phase two, there should be better coordination between the mission headquarters in El Fasher and the Sectors, as well as proper guidance to the state offices on the changing nature of the mission and the required new thinking and approach. Insufficient coordination and guidance on the operationalization of the two-pronged approach and the scope of stabilization was evident in the Sectors and is a cause for concern with regard to the implementation of the mission's mandate.

65. As phase two proceeds, therefore, a greater focus must be placed on mandate delivery in the current environment.

66. In line with paragraph 71 of the special report (S/2017/437), the mission should step up the implementation of a new security posture. The mission's development of an accessibility risk matrix is commendable but the review process should be more comprehensive, to include all areas where security has improved, and more inclusive, by taking into account the views and the needs of the United Nations country team and humanitarian actors. The mission should also review the size of UNAMID camps and compounds so as to ensure adequate security with reduced uniformed components.

C. Way forward

67. Provided that the current trends continue and contingent on considerations by the Security Council of further reductions in uniformed personnel, it is recommended that a review take place before the renewal of the mission's mandate in June 2018, in order to consider a new mission concept with adjusted priorities. As it stands, at the end of phase two, the mission would have reached its limits in the delivery of its priorities in its current geographic scope.

D. Fundraising for the United Nations country team

68. UNAMID and the United Nations country team are in the process of developing a joint fundraising strategy for the implementation of the Integrated Strategic Framework (2017-2019) that identified common priorities for sustainable peace in Darfur. The strategy aims to scale up country team resources for peace consolidation in the next two years, for a phased transition in Darfur, and will also include outreach to non-conventional donors, engagement with international and regional financial institutions and a wider scope of financial resources. Funding for the consolidation of peacebuilding efforts in Darfur should be treated as a political issue of high priority by Member States in order to protect the investments in peace and to avoid a relapse into conflict.

United Nations S/2018/13

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 January 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 4 January 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey herewith a report by the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya (see annex). The report, dated 22 December 2017, covers the period from 23 November to 22 December 2017.

The report was prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-52/DEC.1, of 20 July 2016, and Security Council resolution 2298 (2016), of 22 July 2016, for transmission to the Security Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

18-00171 (E) 050118

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-52/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, dated 20 July 2016, and Security Council resolution 2298 (2016), dated 22 July 2016, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 November to 22 December 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-52/DEC.2, dated 27 July 2016, and EC-M-53/DEC.1, dated 26 August 2016.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report by the Director General

Status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya

1. At its Fifty-Second Meeting, the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") adopted a decision on the "Destruction of Libya's Remaining Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-52/DEC.1, dated 20 July 2016) and requested the Director-General to assist Libya in developing a modified plan of destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons. On 22 July 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2298 (2016), welcoming and endorsing the decision by the Council and requesting the Director-General, through the Secretary-General, to report to the Security Council on a regular basis until the destruction is complete and verified.

2. At the conclusion of its Fifty-Second Meeting, the Council adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Libya's Remaining Category 2 Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-52/DEC.2, dated 27 July 2016). In operative paragraph 17 of that decision, the Council requested the Director-General to report to the Council on a monthly basis on the implementation of the decision. This sixteenth monthly report covers the period from 23 November to 22 December 2017.

Progress in the elimination of Libyan chemical weapons by the State Party hosting destruction activities

3. Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltlasten mbH (GEKA mbH), the designated destruction facility at Munster, Germany, completed the destruction of 110.536 metric tonnes (MT) of phosphorous trichloride on 23 November 2017. This completes the destruction of all Category 2 chemical weapons shipped to Germany for destruction.

4. GEKA mbH previously completed the destruction of the 2-chloroethanol and tributylamine on 17 December 2016 and 20 January 2017, respectively. The destruction of thionyl chloride was completed on 10 September 2017.

5. Teams of the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat"), along with Libyan observers, continued to inspect GEKA mbH every two months, with the final inspection having been conducted from 4 to 7 December 2017. No issues were encountered with the destruction process and all chemicals were verified as destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Libya

6. The Secretariat inspected the destruction operations at GEKA mbH and reviewed the neutralisation of phosphorous trichloride during the aforementioned inspection. The Secretariat was able to review records of the sampling and analysis of the reaction mass in order to confirm completion of destruction. The inspection team verified the completion of the destruction of phosphorous trichloride through on-site confirmation and review of video recordings. A final inspection report confirming this information was generated.

7. As previously reported, the Secretariat was informed that during decanting operations at the Ruwagha storage facility, one container experienced an exothermic

reaction, causing the material inside to polymerise. Through an agreement with the United Nations Office of Project Services, destruction of the contents of the remaining container began on 25 July and was completed on 7 August 2017. The Secretariat has confirmed the destruction of the contents of the container.

8. On 29 August 2017, the Secretariat received a letter from His Excellency Mr Mohamed Siala, the Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs, noting the approaching completion of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") and inviting the Secretariat to send an inspection team to Libya. On 19 September 2017, the Director-General informed Minister Siala that the Secretariat was in touch with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security regarding updates to the security situation in Libya. Further to this point, the Director-General noted that the Secretariat is working closely with the Libyan National Authority to develop a plan that would allow the Secretariat to comply with the report of the Council at its Eighty-Third Session (paragraph 6.12 of EC-83/5, dated 11 November 2016) requesting soil samples from Ruwagha.

9. On 20 September 2017, the Director-General wrote to the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security requesting an assessment of the feasibility of an inspection team traveling to Ruwagha. For further consideration, on 20 September 2017 the Director-General transmitted a letter to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Mr Ghassan Salamé, informing him of the correspondence from the Libyan Foreign Minister and seeking assistance from UNSMIL in the event of a mission to Ruwagha.

10. On 17 October 2017, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security replied to the Director-General noting that the Ruwagha chemical facility is located in the central province of Al-Jufra, which is currently controlled by the Libyan National Army. A "no-fly zone" has been imposed over this region and the United Nations has not been able to obtain clearance for a flight into the area in the last 18 months. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security recommended that the OPCW first conduct an assessment visit to Tripoli in order to discuss access to the Ruwagha facility with the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, security authorities, and UNSMIL.

11. A Secretariat team travelled to Tripoli on 30 October 2017 to meet with representatives of UNSMIL and representatives of the Libyan Government to assess the viability of a mission to Ruwagha. Discussions revealed the lack of a support structure to provide adequate security for an OPCW team at this time. The Secretariat continues to evaluate options that would allow it to comply with paragraph 6.12 of EC-83/5.

Overall costs and status of the Trust Fund for Support to Libya

12. On 1 August 2016, the Secretariat issued a Note calling for voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Support to Libya (S/1400/2016, dated 1 August 2016). As at the cut-off date of this report, the trust fund had received over EUR 1.2 million, with contributions having been received from Canada, Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, and the United States of America. An additional EUR 133,638 was received from Canada in the form of a transfer of funds from a previous trust fund dedicated to Libya. Furthermore, the Secretariat received a contribution of EUR 20,000 from Spain on 30 June 2017. As at the cut-off date of this report, expenses in the amount of EUR 839,393 had been charged to the trust fund for activities related to the destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons.

13. The Secretariat has been notified that the European Union has approved substantial funding for the clean-up operations at the Ruwagha Tank Farm. The

project will be co-funded through contributions from Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, and Spain. The project will consist of cleaning the decanted tanks in the storage area, along with the reaction mass from the neutralised tank noted in paragraph 7 above. An additional 350 MT of highly acidic mustard hydrolysate from the earlier neutralisation of distilled sulfur mustard has been stored in corroded and leaking containers. All remaining items and material will be treated in an environmentally compliant manner, in line with Libya's obligations under paragraph 10 of Article IV of the Convention.

14. The Director-General would once again like to express his appreciation to those States Parties that have made voluntary contributions to the trust fund and to the European Union for its contribution to eliminate the remnants of Libya's former chemical weapons programme.

United Nations S/2018/14

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 January 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 17 January 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twenty-first report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Chair
Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities

18-00236 (E) 310118

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Twenty-first report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities

Summary

In Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)[a] lost control over all remaining urban areas. The group continues to transform into a terror organization with a flat hierarchy, with cells and affiliates increasingly acting autonomously. The global fight against ISIL will have to focus on the threat posed by less visible international networks. The combination of "frustrated travellers",[b] ISIL sympathizers, returnees and relocators poses an increased security risk for Member States. Attempts by ISIL to infuse money into the licit economy in combination with a greater inflow of funds for reconstruction of recaptured areas will necessitate adjusted counter measures.

The global Al-Qaida network has remained resilient and in several regions poses a greater threat than ISIL. Despite being under military pressure, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (QDe.129) increasingly serves as the communications hub for Al-Qaida as a whole. In North and West Africa, Al-Qaida affiliates and groups loyal to ISIL increased their activities; while in East Africa, Al-Shabaab (SOe.001) has sustained its dominance over ISIL groups. In South Asia, Al-Qaida affiliates and ISIL are taking advantage of the volatile security situation in Afghanistan. Although the recapture of Marawi City by the Philippine authorities was a military success, ISIL affiliates' temporary stronghold within the city was a propaganda victory with potential long-term consequences for the region.

The global flow of foreign terrorist fighters has continued to slow, with only individual cases being reported. However, the marked reduction of territorial control by ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic will force many foreign terrorist fighters to make a choice either to join other groups or to leave the region. With the adoption of resolution 2396 (2017), the Security Council has taken a significant step to meet the challenges posed by returnees and relocators.

[a] Listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq (QDe.115).

[b] The Term "frustrated travellers" refers to individuals that demonstrated an intention to travel to conflict zones but were unable to owing to increased control measures by Member States and remain radicalized.

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I. Overview of the threat

A. Evolving threat from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida

1. ISIL suffered strategic military setbacks in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and the southern Philippines during the second half of 2017. As a response, the organization continues to emphasize external attacks. At the same time, the global Al-Qaida network has remained remarkably resilient. Al-Qaida affiliates remain the dominant terror threat in some regions, such as Somalia and Yemen, a fact demonstrated by a continuous stream of attacks and foiled operations. In West Africa and South Asia, Al-Qaida affiliates remain a threat at least as serious to Member States as ISIL, with ISIL currently remaining unable to reach a dominant position.

2. With the transformation of ISIL, its distinguishing feature — the focus on conquering and holding territory — is disappearing. This will likely also diminish the ability of ISIL to recruit from a wide range of social strata. While ISIL could previously promote itself as a proto-State structure, and therefore also attracted individuals willing to support the establishment of the so called "caliphate", its potential recruitment pool will now shrink to individuals mainly motivated to fight or to conduct terror attacks. This and increased control measures by Member States had positive effects on the overall flow of new foreign terrorist fighters, which has nearly come to a halt globally.

3. Member States highlighted that some members of both organizations have been willing and able to support each other in the preparation of attacks (see S/2016/629, para. 3). Therefore, the potential convergence of both networks, at least in some regions, is a potential new threat. In addition, Al-Qaida propaganda continues to highlight a new generation of potential leaders, such as Hamza bin Laden (see S/2017/573, para. 30), in an apparent attempt to project a younger image to its sympathizers.

B. Transformation of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant after the loss of territorial control in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic

4. The significant and sustained military pressure levied upon ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic resulted in the loss of control by ISIL over urban areas in both countries. As a result of these setbacks, ISIL was forced to evolve and has continued its transformation from a hierarchically organized group, concentrating on conquering and holding territory, to a networked group, emphasizing terror attacks within and outside the conflict zone.[1] Member States highlighted that this new and emerging global network has a flat hierarchy, and that there is less operational command and control from ISIL core over the activities of its affiliates.

5. In addition, the propaganda machinery of the ISIL core is further decentralizing, and the quality of its material continues to decline (see S/2017/35, para. 17, and S/2017/573, para. 20). For example, Member States highlighted that ISIL has claimed responsibility for attacks for which no conceivable connection to the group can be established and that some online publications, such as *Rumiyah*, have ceased to appear. Nevertheless, while its public propaganda machinery deteriorates, foreign terrorist fighters and ISIL members and sympathizers continue to be able to skilfully employ social media, encryption technology and the dark web to communicate with each

[1] Member State information. This transformation has been ongoing for over a year. See S/2017/573, paras. 16 and 17.

other and motivate and facilitate attacks. These capabilities, a growing number of "frustrated travellers", the persistent threat posed by terrorist groups recruiting insiders in critical infrastructure[2] and the risk that returnees and relocators bring leadership and enhanced terrorist capabilities and infuse these into already existing networks of radicalized sympathizers are major concerns for Member States.

6. As a result of this ongoing transformation, a new phase in the fight against ISIL is beginning. While, in the first phase, the territorial grounding of the group allowed for easier location of its fighters, including foreign terrorist fighters within the conflict zone, during the next phase, locating individuals posing a threat will become more challenging. Information sharing concerning the identity of foreign terrorist fighters as well as known ISIL members will remain vital. The sanctions list remains one of the key global instruments in this regard.

II. Regional trends

A. Levant

7. During the reporting period, military pressure levied upon ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic resulted in significant territorial losses for the group. With the recapture of Qa'im in Iraq and Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah and Albu Kamal in the Syrian Arab Republic, the group no longer controls major cities in either country.[3] However, Member States reported that ISIL cells continue to operate in most recaptured cities. In addition, smaller groups of ISIL fighters remain in the countryside east of the Euphrates River in the Syrian Arab Republic and in the deserts of northern Iraq. Member States indicated that Jaysh Khalid Ibn al-Waleed (QDe.155) commands between 700 and 1,500 fighters in the south of the country. Several Member States reported that, after the recapture of Raqqah, Dayr al-Zawr and Albu Kamal, ISIL fighters fled towards the north, potentially with the intention of exiting the country via its northern borders. A smaller number of fighters moved towards the south of the country.[4] Given the fluid situation, Member States were not able to give precise estimates of how many foreign terrorist fighters remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

8. Member States highlighted that the clearance of recaptured areas, such as Mosul and Raqqah, is challenging, as ISIL leaves behind large numbers of booby traps and improvised explosive devices. These slow down stabilization efforts.

9. Coupled with its military losses, the once abundant revenues of ISIL have fallen by more than 90 per cent since 2015.[5] The group's recent losses of oil and gas fields in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the Al-Omar and Al-Tanak oil fields and the Conoco gas field, is a considerable setback for ISIL, given its former reliance on hydrocarbon revenues.[6] However, ISIL could continue to profit from the trade in hydrocarbons by extorting distribution and through its control of checkpoints.[7] ISIL may retain some limited access to oil, but to the extent that ISIL maintains any such access, it is likely to use it for its own operations and not for revenue generation.[8]

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[2] S/2017/573, para. 10 and resolution 2341 (2017).

[3] Member State information.

[4] Member State information.

[5] Member State information.

[6] Member State information. Until the latest territorial losses in Dayr al-Zawr Province, ISIL earned revenues of several million dollars per month from oil.

[7] Member State information.

[8] Member State information.

Instead, as previously reported by the Monitoring Team, ISIL is expected to revert to "Al-Qaida-in-Iraq-style" financing tactics (see S/2017/35, para. 22).

10. Although the size of the reserves that ISIL had been able to maintain and hide is not clear, the Team has received information that funds continue to flow from the ISIL core to its branches, while the branches are becoming increasingly crucial for the ISIL global brand, given defeats in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.[9] However, affiliates are looking for ways to diversify their income to be able to sustain themselves independently of the ISIL core.[10]

11. ISIL is relying on established networks and facilitators across the Middle East to move funds using hawala and cash couriers.[11] These facilitators are experienced professionals providing both licit and illicit financial services and capable of using more complex methods, such a trade-based money-laundering.[12] When there have been disruptions to these facilitation networks, such as owing to arrests, ISIL has been able to adapt and set up new routes.[13]

12. ISIL is penetrating legitimate businesses in the region by using seemingly unconnected or "clean" individuals with access to the financial system as fronts, while ISIL members operate in the background.[14] Member States remain concerned that ISIL may be able to generate profits via such ISIL-related businesses, among them money exchange houses and agricultural, real estate and construction companies, and invest laundered funds locally, regionally and internationally.[15]

13. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the risk that ISIL-related individuals may attempt to get involved in legitimate businesses within their jurisdiction and encourage them, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to raise awareness concerning this risk among relevant private sector stakeholders, encouraging them also to exercise increased vigilance and appropriate due diligence procedures to mitigate this risk.**

14. Member States continued to raise concerns that more opportunities for ISIL to earn money could open up as international aid starts flowing into liberated areas, especially as ISIL might be involved in local businesses such as construction companies.[16] Thus, reconstruction funds will have to be carefully targeted so as not to reach the wrong hands.[17] Similarly, as the ability of ISIL to run its financial operations from the conflict zones continues to be challenged, it will become essential that ISIL be unable to establish financial hubs within countries in the region. Hence, it remains crucial that the sanctions list is up to date as a tool to tackle the efforts of ISIL at evasion (see S/2017/35, para. 66).

15. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the risk of the misuse of aid and reconstruction funds and encouraging them, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to raise awareness of this risk among the relevant organizations and companies involved in stabilization and reconstruction efforts in the conflict zones,**

[9] Member State information.
[10] Member State information. See also S/2017/467, para. 12.
[11] Member State information. See also S/2017/573, para. 2.
[12] Member State information.
[13] Member State information.
[14] Member State information.
[15] Member State information.
[16] Member State information. See also S/2017/467, para. 16.
[17] Member State information.

promoting heightened vigilance and partner vetting during the implementation phase of their projects.

16. Several Member States highlighted to the Team that the Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (ANF) (QDe.137) remains one of the strongest and largest Al-Qaida affiliates globally. The aim of ANF is to absorb smaller groups within the Syrian Arab Republic using threats, violence and material incentives.[18] ANF has reverted to forced recruitment, including recruitment of minors.[19] Within the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) coalition, ANF remains the dominant force, commanding between 7,000 and 11,000 fighters, including several thousand foreign terrorist fighters, and has its main power base within Idlib Province.[20]

17. Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani (QDi.317) continues to face challenges to his leadership of HTS, with some within ANF arguing that the group should have a more international outlook and not concentrate only on the situation within the Syrian Arab Republic.[21] Member States assess that these disagreements led to the formation of a group subsequently adopting the name Ansar al-Furqan, which consists of prominent hard-line clerics, including Sami al-Aridi (not listed) and Iyad Nazmi Salih Khalil (QDi.400). Both insist that the group can operate only under the supervision of Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri (QDi.006).[22] In November 2017, Al-Zawahiri publicly criticized HTS, in particular its "arrests" of several clerics loyal to Al-Qaida.[23]

18. ANF appears to be largely self-sufficient in terms of funding.[24] The group is entrenched in society and able to make money through its stronghold in Idlib Province (by inserting itself into and profiting from local businesses such as bakeries and factories) and checkpoints, kidnapping for ransom of local business persons, taking over the resources and finances of other groups or "war spoils" and exploiting charity operations and aid, as well as local fundraising through charities.[25] Some Member States also highlighted that ANF continues to benefit from the looting of antiquities within the territory that the group controls.[26] As a result of its access to finances, ANF has been able to consolidate its dominance.[27]

B. Arabian Peninsula

19. According to the assessment of Member States, Al-Qaida remains a serious threat within the Arabian Peninsula. AQAP continued to plot external attacks, including recently in the wider Middle East. For example, in July 2017, a plot targeting Jordan was disrupted. The attack was planned in Yemen by the AQAP deputy, Khalid Omar Batarfi (not listed).[28]

20. In Yemen, AQAP is still operating in Mukalla, Shabwah, and Ma'rib, while some of its leaders are located in the Jubah and Rawdah areas, in Ma'rib Governorate, the Wadi' district in a village known as Mujan, the Mahfad district in an area known

[18] Member State information.
[19] Member State information.
[20] Member State information.
[21] Member State information.
[22] Member State information.
[23] "Let us fight them as a solid structure", As-Sahab Media Foundation, 28 November 2017.
[24] Member State information.
[25] Member State information.
[26] For example, one Member State reported that ANF had invited potential foreign buyers from the region to purchase antiquities from the Idlib museum. Recently, the restitution process for antiquities looted by ANF was initiated by a Member State.
[27] Member State information.
[28] Member State information.

as Jabal,[29] the Mudiyah district near an area known as Sadd Wajd, and in the Lawdar district in a mountainous area known as Junh. AQAP leaders and fighters are strengthening their ties with Yemeni tribes and families, in many cases through marriages. In addition, Member States highlighted that AQAP is conducting and financing social activities to demonstrate its governing and humanitarian capabilities to the Yemeni community.

21. AQAP continues to play a leading role in the propaganda activities of the Al-Qaida core (see S/2017/573, para. 30). In addition to *Inspire* (an English language magazine), *Al Masra* (an Arabic language magazine) is becoming one of the leading outlets in which leaders of the Al-Qaida core, the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (QDe.014), Al-Qaida in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS), and Al-Shabaab (SOe.001) have been interviewed and announced attacks. Member States assess that AQAP in Yemen serves as the communications hub for the entire Al-Qaida organization.

22. AQAP continues to be under sustained military pressure. During the past six months, airstrikes have removed many of its field commanders and a significant number of its fighters and have shrunk the group's financial capabilities.[30] Consequently, AQAP is currently trying to avoid clashes with local tribes.[31] The group is reorganizing itself to expand its influence and gain more recruits. According to Member State information, in October 2017, the AQAP leader, Qasim Mohamed Mahdi al-Rimi (QDi.282) appointed a new sharia official, Abdullah Mubarak (not listed), a Yemeni national and graduate of Iman University in Sana'a, to replace the deceased Saudi national, Ibrahim al-Rubaysh. In addition, the group has appointed a number of new "emirs" in different regions who report to the military commander of the organization, Ammar al-San'ani (not listed).[32]

23. Member States reported that AQAP operatives are using encrypted instant messaging applications and wireless equipment, which has been distributed to the group's "emirs" and to owners of safe houses. Since mid-2017, the financial situation of AQAP has further declined owing to the sustained pressure levied upon the group; therefore, the group has been generating funds by selling weapons and ammunitions to Yemeni tribes and arms dealers.[33] Additional income streams are bank robberies, kidnapping for ransom and extortion.[34]

24. Despite the current difficulties of AQAP, Member States assess that ISIL in Yemen remains weaker than AQAP. ISIL cells are active in Aden, Bayda', and in some areas in Qayfah, where clashes with security forces took place. The group is also responsible for several assassinations of Yemeni officials in Aden.[35] On 29 November 2017, ISIL in Yemen claimed responsibility for a car explosion targeting the Ministry of Finance in Aden; the Amaq News Agency of the ISIL core alleged that up to five guards were killed.

[29] Member State information.
[30] Member State information.
[31] Member State information.
[32] Ammar al-San'ani is believed to be the *nom de guerre* of the Yemeni national, Ibrahim Ali Mas'ud al-Sanfi, the brother in-law of the deceased Nasir al-Wuhayshi (Member State information).
[33] Member State information.
[34] Member State information.
[35] Member State information.

C. Africa

1. North Africa

25. Member States have expressed concerns about the resilience of groups in Egypt loyal to ISIL and indicated that two separate wings operate within the country. On the Sinai Peninsula, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM), which publicly declared allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi[36] in November 2014 (see S/2017/35, para. 41), continues to be active. Furthermore, during the reporting period, ISIL cells on the Egyptian mainland became more visible.[37] According to Member State information, ABM remains the stronger group, potentially commanding up to 1,000 fighters; it does not control the cells on the mainland, but there is some coordination between the two groups.

26. In October 2017, ABM gained additional finances through a bank robbery in Arish, in North Sinai, where the group is now concentrated; and in November 2017, the group attacked a mosque in nearby Al-Rawda, killing more than 300 worshippers.[38] The group continues to depend on support from some local Bedouin tribes, through which it is able to run makeshift training camps, manufacture improvised explosive devices, store arms and explosives and plan operations.[39] Meanwhile, other Bedouins cooperate with the security authorities.[40] Member States reported that ABM controls some of the smuggling routes on the Peninsula, moving cash and weapons, and has been joined by foreign terrorist fighters relocating from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. ABM also continues to receive money from the ISIL core through third countries in the region.[41] Its current "emir", Abu Usama Al-Misri (not listed) is from mainland Egypt.

27. On the Egyptian mainland, small cells of ISIL sympathizers, in particular in urban areas, continue to operate.[42] According to the assessment of Member States, these cells are responsible for a string of attacks against the Coptic community. According to one Member State, several individuals accused of being involved in these attacks have been arrested. There is interchange between ISIL in Egypt and Libya across the desert borders, and a senior ISIL member from Libya sits on the shura council of ABM.[43]

28. Despite a decrease in the intensity of the threat in Libya during the reporting period, ISIL remains intent on rebuilding its capabilities. Member States indicated that the group's dispersed fighters sustain an underground presence. Some ISIL cells, particularly in Darnah, and Sabratah, south of Sirte, and Bani Walid, have recently reinforced their presence by means of fighters transferred from southern Libya and with relocators and returnees from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.[44] One Member State outlined that ISIL fighters have been regrouping in the Sirte Basin and attempting to reach out to tribal networks to extend their presence. The group continues to demonstrate relevance, through regular terrorist attacks (see S/2017/573, para. 33).

29. Member States reported that fighters from regional ISIL affiliates have been moving to Libya, establishing links with ISIL and collaborating, mainly in terms of

[36] Listed as Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (QDi.299).
[37] Member State information.
[38] Member State information.
[39] Member State information.
[40] Member State information.
[41] Member State information.
[42] Member State information.
[43] Member State information.
[44] Member State information.

training, supply of weapons and logistical support. Fighters from Boko Haram[45] are also maintaining small cells inside Libya.[46] Concern has also been expressed that Boko Haram elements could use the western border and south-eastern borders of Libya to access other regional countries.[47] Member States assessed that there is a potential for the transfer of leaders from ISIL in Libya to other conflict zones in West Africa and the Sahel region, including Mali.[48]

30. Member States reported that ISIL in Libya continues to "tax" networks involved in human smuggling and trafficking. While smugglers, including antiquities traffickers, and ISIL fighters operate in close proximity, ISIL is not itself running the networks.[49] ISIL also retains roadblocks and roving checkpoints in Libya to generate funds.[50]

31. In Tunisia, the security situation improved as compared with the previous reporting period. However, the threat from both ISIL and Al-Qaida persists. The self-proclaimed ISIL affiliate, Jund al-Khilafah in Tunisia, continues to operate small cells in the country's mountainous regions.[51] The Uqba bin Nafi Battalion of AQIM also maintains a presence in the country.[52] Both groups have claimed recent attacks in Tunisia. A campaign by the Tunisian authorities has led to the arrest or elimination of a considerable number of fighters. A regional Member State also expressed concern about the threat that returning foreign terrorist fighters[53] continue to pose to Tunisia and the region.

2. West Africa

32. Member States reported that, over the course of 2017, most Sahelian terrorist entities have established formal links with either ISIL or Al-Qaida. However, to date, no rivalry between the various groups has been observed. The situation in Mali remains critical. Al-Qaida coalition, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (see S/2017/573, paras. 1 and 37–39), succeeded in consolidating its different tribal and ethnic loyalties. Since March 2017, the coalition has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks[54] against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and it attacked a convoy of the Prime Minister of Mali on 8 November. On 5 July 2017, the group confronted Nigerien forces for the first time.[55]

33. Member States highlighted that the threat posed by Al-Qaida and ISIL-related groups continues to spread to central and southern Mali, as well as neighbouring countries. In Burkina Faso, a complex attack against the Café Istanbul in Ouagadougou, similar to previous attacks in Bamako, Grand Bassam and Ouagadougou, killed 18 people on 13 August 2017. Four days later, a mine attack against a military vehicle was allegedly carried out by an ISIL affiliate, Ansar al-Islam.[56] This group controls around 100 fighters and was also responsible for the

[45] Listed as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (QDe.138).
[46] Member State information.
[47] Member State information.
[48] Member State information.
[49] Member State information.
[50] Member State information.
[51] Member State information.
[52] Member State information.
[53] Several Tunisian foreign terrorist fighters held high-ranking positions within ISIL.
[54] For example, the attacks against MINUSMA in Kidal on 20 September 2017 and near Douentza on 9 November 2017.
[55] "Niger: la coalition terroriste d'Iyad Ag Ghali revendique l'attaque de Midal", Radio France Internationale, 10 July 2017.
[56] Member States assessed that the group is led by Jafar Dicko (not listed).

attack on a military base in Nassoumbou in December 2017.[57] It remains active in Soum and Oudalan provinces in Burkina Faso. The stronger ISIL affiliate in the region remains a faction of Al Mourabitoun (QDe.141), led by al-Sahrawi (see S/2017/35, paras. 43 and 44).[58] According to a Member State, this ISIL faction remains active in Niger and Mali and is developing contacts in Libya.

34. However, many attacks in the region have not been claimed by a specific group, which presents a challenge to Member State security forces analysing the threat.[59] Moreover, while, initially, attacks were focused on domestic and international military and security forces, the local population is increasingly targeted.[60] As during the period from 2012 to 2013, teachers are frequently threatened, which has forced hundreds of schools to close in the region, presenting a political, economic and social challenge.[61]

35. Member States highlighted that Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province generally continue to operate in separate areas and follow different strategies and tactics (see S/2017/35, para. 45). To date, no conflict has appeared to emerge between these two groups. Boko Haram continues to use suicide attacks as one of its main terrorist tools. According to public reports, 2017 has seen an unprecedented high number of female suicide bombers used by Boko Haram.[62]

36. During the reporting period, the funding sources for these groups did not change. Member States explained that theft and extortion by the hijacking of vehicles with their cargo remain important sources of funds. Kidnapping for ransom remains one of the main source of funding, and kidnapping of the local population, including religious representatives, teachers, local soldiers and children, continues.[63] Member States reported that ISIL- and Al-Qaida-affiliated groups in the region benefit from "taxing" the flow of drugs, goods and individuals through the territory in which they are active.

37. Transnational movements of foreign terrorist fighters remain a concern for Member States in the region. Recently, Member States reported an increasing number of cases of fighters switching loyalties between various entities throughout the region. Some operate in a mercenary manner, switching between different groups, owing to financial incentives.[64]

3. East Africa

38. The Al-Qaida affiliate, Al-Shabaab, remains resilient and has sustained its dominance over ISIL affiliates in Somalia. Member States assess that Al-Shabaab posed a greater threat than ISIL to Somalia and the countries which contribute troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In 2017, Al-Shabaab pursued its goal of establishing a presence beyond Somalia and conducted operations seeking to set up bases in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.[65] Additionally, Al-Shabaab enhanced its capabilities and frequency of attacks by recruiting insiders. For instance, most

[57] Member State information.
[58] The group calls itself Islamic State in the Greater Sahara.
[59] Member State information.
[60] Member State information.
[61] Member State information.
[62] See Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, "Exploding stereotypes: the unexpected operational and demographic characteristics of Boko Haram's suicide bombers", Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, August 2017.
[63] Member State information.
[64] Member State information.
[65] Member State information.

attacks in Mogadishu in 2017 were facilitated by insiders who assisted, directed and provided logistical support, including intelligence.[66]

39. The movements of foreign terrorist fighters, couriers and individuals performing logistical tasks between Somalia and Yemen continues. These movements are facilitated by former Al-Shabaab fighters who relocated to Yemen and are active in AQAP.[67] Although the group initially pursued a plan to eliminate foreign terrorist fighters that came to Somalia from outside the immediate region to join ISIL (see S/2017/573, para. 48), more recently, Al-Shabaab has been welcoming foreign terrorist fighters whose skills and knowledge are essential in training their fighters. These fighters serve temporarily as trainers and leave once the transfer of knowledge, capabilities and skills is accomplished.[68]

40. The efforts of AMISOM have to some extent degraded Al-Shabaab's capabilities and decreased its financing streams in some strategic towns where the fighters have been dislocated. Subsequently, Al-Shabaab fighters are resorting to criminality, including looting, to finance their operations.[69] However, in territories under their control, in addition to known financing streams (see S/2017/573, para. 47), Al-Shabaab is exchanging prisoners for money, running quasi-business enterprises, and collecting protection fees and "taxes" from farmers, herdsmen and shop owners.[70]

41. Despite the inroads made by ISIL in Puntland and southern Somalia in early 2017, ISIL has not expanded as initially expected, owing to several factors. Firstly, as a result of rivalry between the two groups, Al-Shabaab leaders will not permit Abdikadir Mumin (not listed) to be more influential and have more territorial control than themselves. Secondly, Member States observed that Mumin has not recently issued directions to his fighters to conduct attacks, which is attributable to a power struggle between Mumin and his subordinates, consequently paralysing their operations.[71] One Member State assessed that Mumin does not command substantive support from his fighters because he is not a well-known figure within extremist circles, lacks charisma and was unwell during most of 2017. Additionally, the Puntland authorities continue to crack down on ISIL activities, weakening the impact the group can have.

42. ISIL in Yemen continues to provide material and training support to ISIL in Somalia, although the support is limited and unreliable.[72] Consequently, Member States highlighted that ISIL cannot sustain the high salaries initially paid to its fighters. Like Al-Shabaab, ISIL has begun collecting revenues from locals. This development is likely to heighten the conflict between the two groups as they compete for control of resources.

43. Human traffickers and smugglers are offering services to various destinations, including Libya, at a fee of $5,000 to $10,000 per person.[73] This is likely to attract relocating or returning foreign terrorist fighters who prefer to avoid travelling through big towns, choosing instead to travel through remote areas to avoid detection. Specifically, in 2016 and 2017, foreign terrorist fighters exploited smuggling links into Libya and within the country to facilitate their movements. Subsequently, Member States reported that they had captured some foreign terrorist fighters destined

[66] Member State information
[67] Member State information
[68] Member State information
[69] Member State information
[70] Member State information
[71] Member State information
[72] Member State information
[73] Member State information

for Libya to join ISIL, or that they were dealing with returnees, comprised of families of foreign terrorist fighters believed to have died in combat in Libya.

D. Europe

44. During the reporting period, ISIL continued to enable and inspire attacks in Europe, demonstrating that the continent remains a priority region for external attacks by ISIL supporters. Member States emphasized that foreign terrorist fighters in the conflict zones continue to motivate and encourage attacks by sympathizers via the Internet and social media. In addition, a growing group of "frustrated travellers" present a second security challenge. Member States explained that investigations of recent attacks, such as the attacks in Spain in August 2017, demonstrated a tightly interwoven network between sympathizers in Europe and foreign terrorist fighters within the conflict zones. In addition, in some cases, these networks also included current or former Al-Qaida facilitators abroad.

45. As in other regions, only a few new foreign terrorist fighters travelling from European countries to the conflict zones have been reported to the Team. In addition, the number of returnees going back to Europe has dropped.[74] However, Member States continue to express concern that returnees may infuse already existing networks of sympathizers with new capabilities, such as bomb-making skills, and therefore present a potential significant challenge for authorities. While attacks and foiled terrorist plots demonstrated limited technical capabilities and the continued use of unsophisticated methods, such as knives, hammers or vehicles, several Member States reported the seizures of significant amounts of components for improvised explosive devices, and, in some cases, sustained attempts to produce explosive materials.[75] Member States also remain concerned about instructional videos and material, disseminated via the Internet and social media, explaining various designs for such devices.

46. Member States highlighted that the return of minors continues to present difficult legal issues (see S/2017/573, para. 12) and emphasized that some children were radicalized and even involved in fighting in the conflict zones and that it is difficult to manage or prosecute such cases, in part since specialized legislation is not yet available.[76] Several Member States expressed concern about the impact that the release of currently imprisoned returnees may have on the domestic security situation. The difficulty in obtaining criminal evidence from within the conflict zones is frequently a challenge for prosecutors and only allows the imposition of limited sentences for potentially highly dangerous individuals. Radicalization within the prison system also remains a challenge (see S/2017/573, para. 10).

E. Central and South Asia

47. As elsewhere, the travel of new foreign terrorist fighters from Central and South Asia to the conflict zones has virtually ceased, initially because of measures taken by Member States, but later by the lack of appetite or capacity on the part of the ISIL core to receive new foreign terrorist fighters. ANF and its various related groups are, however, still attractive to some Central Asian expatriates who have been radicalized

[74] Member State information.

[75] For example, the incident of the acetone peroxide (TATP) factory of the terrorist cell in Cambrils. The original plan was to attack the Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona. See *Institute for the Study of War*, "The Coordinated ISIS campaign in Europe", 20 September 2017.

[76] "Le cas particulier des enfants soldats", *Le Monde*, 3-4 December 2017.

and recruited as fighters.[77] Member States remain concerned that returnees might exacerbate the regional terrorism threat. Some relocators originating from Central Asia have been involved in terrorist attacks in Turkey, the Russian Federation and European countries in the past two years. A number travelled from Turkey to South-East Asia, where their onward travel and current fate are unknown.[78]

48. Despite having been further degraded by Afghan and international military operations, ISIL continues to resist and mount attacks, especially in Kabul. In some areas, it is in violent competition with the Taliban; in others there appears to be some mutual accommodation.[79] The number and geographic dispersal of ISIL-affiliated elements in Afghanistan has increased. Some Member States expressed concern that the presence of ethnic Uzbek and Tajik fighters in northern Afghanistan could potentially lead over time to an ISIL threat to the Central Asian States. Overall, in the country, ISIL commands between 1,000 and 4,000 fighters, which include former members of the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (QDe.132) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (QDe.010), fighters from outside the immediate region, as well as Afghan Taliban defectors. A significant number of the fighters formerly belonged to TTP.[80] Member States highlighted that ISIL in Nangarhar continues to lose personnel owing to sustained military pressure but is able to replenish its ranks fairly quickly.

49. ISIL in Afghanistan obtains funds by extorting the population and agricultural production in Nangarhar.[81] The group has made some money from timber and kidnapping for ransom but does not have any large, internal sources of revenue and would struggle without support from the ISIL core.[82] To date, there are no indications that it is involved in the drug trade. Indeed, ISIL in Afghanistan has executed its own members suspected of involvement in the trade.[83] ISIL in Afghanistan has received some financial support from the ISIL core, but has been encouraged to become more self-sufficient and recognizes that funding from the ISIL core may not continue.[84] It is therefore under pressure to find new ways of raising money, especially if it is to maintain its competitive advantage of paying fighters higher wages than other groups in the region.

50. Member States highlighted that there was an increase in fighters operating in Afghanistan. Fighters loyal to the Taliban combined with members of various Al-Qaida affiliated groups could number as many as 60,000 fighters, an increase from 2016.[85] Member States reported that, currently, there are more than 20 groups active in the country. The Taliban remains the largest, with about 40,000 to 45,000 fighters.[86] The others are ISIL in Afghanistan and a range of Al-Qaida affiliated entities, including TTP, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) (QDe.118), Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ) (QDe.096), Lashkar-e-Islam (LeI), Jundullah, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) (QDe.088), and IMU. IMU has split and has some factions, varying in size and location, which are working with Al-Qaida, ISIL or the Taliban.[87]

51. Member States estimate the number of foreign terrorist fighters currently operating in Afghanistan to be between fewer than 10,000 and as many as 15,000. A

[77] Member State information.
[78] Member State information.
[79] Member State information.
[80] Member State information.
[81] Member State information.
[82] Member State information.
[83] Member State information.
[84] Member States information. See also S/2017/573, para. 57.
[85] Member State information.
[86] Member State information.
[87] Member State information.

significant number of these hail from the immediate region. Relocators from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic have also travelled to Afghanistan. One Member State estimates the current number at around 200.

52. Al-Qaida continues to cooperate with the Taliban in return for sanctuary and operating space (see S/2017/409, paras. 14–16). Al-Zawahiri is still assumed to be in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region (see S/2017/409, para. 17). According to one Member State, AQIS fighters operate as advisers and trainers of the Taliban, with 150 to 180 operatives present in southern and eastern Afghanistan. AQIS also recruits personnel from remote areas of India and Bangladesh.[88] Despite Member State concerns, it is not clear that significant numbers of Al-Qaida elements ultimately travelled to the Syrian Arab Republic to join the fight there (see S/2017/573, para. 56).

53. Pakistani military operations conducted in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas resulted in the arrest of 4,000 terrorists through more than 2,000 intelligence-based operations; approximately 100 local support networks have also been disrupted.[89] The military operations also denied space for ISIL to establish an organizational structure in the area. Terrorist attacks claimed by ISIL are mainly carried out by members of local groups with cross-border planning and support by ISIL.[90]

54. One Member State expressed concern about the vulnerability of the Maldives to returnees, since the number of Maldivian fighters per capita is one of the highest in the world.

F. South-East Asia

55. Member States assess that the losses of ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic are exacerbating the threat to South-East Asia, as its funds and fighters are scattered around the world. Although the majority of the approximately 1,000 foreign terrorist fighters from South-East Asia have not yet returned, those that have, as well as relocating foreign terrorist fighters, present a transnational threat.[91] The ISIL-linked groups operating within different Member States in the region have cooperated with one another with regard to the flow of fighters, funds and weapons.[92] Furthermore, fighters from outside the region have been active and, in many cases, arrested or killed in the region.[93]

56. The region has seen a marked increase in terrorist plots in the past couple of years.[94] In Indonesia alone, there were at least 10 ISIL-inspired attacks from January 2016 to June 2017.[95] With Mujahidin Indonesian Timur (MIT) (QDe.150) largely neutralized, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) (see S/2017/573, para. 62) and Jamaah Ansarul Khilafah (JAK) remain two of the most significant ISIL-linked terrorist networks in Indonesia, each with a presence in several provinces.[96] The ideological leader of JAD is Oman Rochman (QDi.407), while JAK is led by the former prisoner

[88] Member State information.
[89] Member State information.
[90] Member State information.
[91] Member State information.
[92] Member State information. See also Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "Marawi, The 'East Asia Wilayah' and Indonesia", 21 July 2017.
[93] Member State information. For example, Malaysian authorities have arrested dozens of foreign terrorist fighters of various nationalities. In one case, they arrested and deported a senior ex-ISIL commander from Iraq. During the siege of Marawi, foreign terrorist fighters from outside the region were killed.
[94] Member State information.
[95] Member State information.
[96] Member State information.

and one-time Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (QDe.092) member, Abu Husna (not listed).[97] To date, JAD has been the more active group in terms of attacks, while JAK is seen as a growing threat.[98]

57. The death of the influential Malaysian foreign terrorist fighter, Muhammad Wanndy Mohamed Jedi, has led to a temporary reduction in the threat to Malaysia, as he actively directed plots from Syria, including the deadly Movida attack (see S/2017/35, para. 60). Overall, since 2013, 18 plots have been uncovered in Malaysia, a mixture of plots directed from the Syrian Arab Republic and locally inspired as well as lone-actor attacks.[99] Furthermore, in 2017, the Malaysian authorities disrupted cells within Malaysia recruiting locals and foreigners to fight in the southern Philippines.[100]

58. The defeat of ISIL affiliates in Marawi City in the southern Philippines after five months of intense urban guerrilla warfare is a setback for the aspirations of ISIL in the region, given the deaths of leaders such as Isnilon Totoni Hapilon (QDi.204), the "emir" of ISIL in East Asia,[101] the Maute brothers (see S/2017/573, paras. 59 and 60) and the Malaysian national, Mahmud Ahmad, a well-connected facilitator.[102] In their fight to recapture the city, Philippine forces were confronted with the militants' use of snipers, improvised explosive devices, diversionary attacks, drones, underground tunnels and fox holes and human shields.[103]

59. Despite these losses, Marawi emerged as a major symbolic and propaganda victory for ISIL, as ISIL affiliates succeeded in occupying an urban area, and, according to Member States, the ISIL threat to the Philippines persists despite the end of the siege and the deaths of senior leaders. In their assessment, the siege could have long-term repercussions for the region and serve as inspiration for other militants. The publicity value of the siege was apparent in the increased focus by ISIL on South-East Asia and it calls for foreign terrorist fighters to migrate to the region in its propaganda.[104] However, in the short term, ISIL-affiliated militants in the southern Philippines will need some time to regroup, especially with no obvious leader capable of replacing Hapilon and uniting the disparate factions.[105]

60. ISIL affiliates are not the only threat to the region, as South-East Asia also faces a threat from long-term Al-Qaida affiliates with lasting appeal in the region.[106] As with Al-Qaida affiliates in other parts of the world, regional Member States expect that Al-Qaida affiliates in South-East Asia, in particular JI, will be resurgent.[107] A shifting of alliances from ISIL to Al-Qaida is possible, as many South-East Asian ISIL militants initially emerged from the JI movement.[108] According to Member States, JI is biding its time and remains dangerous.

61. Funding for groups in South-East Asia is raised through donations from sympathizers (usually in small amounts), criminal activities (see S/2017/35, para. 61)

[97] Member State information.
[98] Member State information.
[99] Member State information. Only the Movida attack has been successful.
[100] Member State information.
[101] S/2017/35, para. 59. See also the proscription of Islamic State East Asia by Australia, available from www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/Islamic-State-East-Asia.aspx/.
[102] Member State information.
[103] Member State information.
[104] Member State information.
[105] Member State information. Although some names for a possible successor, such as the Malaysian Amin Baco (not listed) or the Filipino Furuji Indama (not listed), have been floated.
[106] Member State information.
[107] Member State information.
[108] Member State information.

and funding from the ISIL core channelled through third countries, both within and outside the region.[109] From late 2016 to 2017, ISIL-affiliated groups in the southern Philippines received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the ISIL core in advance of the Marawi siege.[110] Furthermore, the siege may result in a financial windfall, as ISIL affiliates were able to secure significant funds by looting banks, only some of which have to date been recovered by the authorities.[111]

III. Impact assessment

62. Multiple regional stakeholders have intensified their efforts against ISIL. In this regard, Saudi Arabia convened, in November 2017, the first meeting of the Ministers of Defence Council[112] of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, a coalition of 41 Member States dedicated to fighting ISIL. Furthermore, Turkey took measures aimed at denying ISIL access to the financial system as well as its generation of funds and to disrupt the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and funds through middlemen or facilitators.

63. Estimates of stolen or looted artefacts are difficult to make, as artefacts were taken from museums and storage facilities as well as from archaeological dig sites and cemeteries. In addition, previously unknown artefacts were unearthed as part of looting activities. However, one Member State estimates that the number of artefacts illegally removed from Syria could be as high as one million pieces. Member States bordering the conflict zone have seized several tens of thousands of items during the past few years.[113] While the inventories of some museums were evacuated, the collections of other museums, such as the Idlib museum, are considered entirely "lost". One Member State reported that the items in Syrian museums, including items in storage facilities, are generally registered in the national Syrian catalogue, maintained by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums.

64. Member States highlighted to the Team that items in Syrian and Iraqi museums are generally marked with a registration number in indelible ink. This number corresponds to the number in the respective museum's catalogue. It is difficult to remove these numbers without damaging the items. Such catalogue numbers can be useful identifiers for items stolen from museums within the conflict zone, enabling Member States authorities and private sector participants to identify suspicious items.

65. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic as well as other Member States which are at risk of their cultural heritage being looted by terrorist organizations, highlighting the usefulness of catalogue registration numbers for the identification of stolen and looted items, encouraging them to compile lists of numbers from museum catalogues and exchange the relevant numbers of items that are known or suspected to have been looted and stolen with Member States bordering the conflict zones, as well as potential destination countries for stolen or looted antiquities and with relevant international organizations.**

[109] Member State information. See also S/2017/573, para. 65.

[110] Member State information.

[111] Member State information.

[112] "Saudi Arabia launches counter-terrorism summit. The inaugural meeting of the IMCTC Ministers of Defence Council has the theme 'Allied Against Terrorism'", *The National*, 24 November 2017.

[113] Member State information.

IV. Sanctions measures

A. Travel ban

66. Member States are concerned that, following the military defeat of ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, a significant number of foreign terrorist fighters currently remaining in both countries will decide to leave, either to return home or to relocate to other conflict zones, as they are not easily able to blend in with the local population. ISIL had collected passports and other identification documents from arriving foreign terrorist fighters and stored them for potential use for international travel.[114] In addition, ISIL obtained around 9,700 blank Syrian passports when it captured passport offices in various cities in the country.[115] Although the numbers of these blank Syrian passports have been reported to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), for inclusion in its Stolen and Lost Travel Document Database, Member States highlighted the risk that returnees or relocators could use these during their attempts to travel internationally.

67. Member States, in particular those bordering the conflict zones, continue to highlight the difficulties in identifying foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators, as well as listed individuals. While the INTERPOL-United Nations Security Council Special Notices, both in their open and confidential versions, carry biometric data of listed individuals, the collection of such data, as well as the inclusion of biometric data for individuals included in the INTERPOL foreign terrorist fighter database, remains an important task, as it enables Member States to identify individuals irrespective of the travel documents they present to authorities.

68. On 21 December 2017, the Security Council adopted resolution 2396 (2017), highlighting the issue of returnees and relocators. The resolution is an update to resolution 2178 (2014) and addresses a range of issues and includes measures reflecting the threat assessments and recommendations made by the Team since 2016. The Security Council, in paragraph 15 of the resolution, also highlights the importance of biometric data for the identification of foreign terrorist fighters and encourages Members States to share biometric data relating to foreign terrorist fighters with INTERPOL.

69. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the importance of controlling the international travel of returnees, relocators, foreign terrorist fighters and listed individuals, emphasizing the importance of biometric information for the identification of individuals, in particular individuals likely to travel with stolen, forged or altered travel documents, highlighting the urgency of the matter; and, in the light of resolution 2396 (2017), encourage again[116] those that have not yet done so, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to submit biometric data, in particular high-quality pictures and fingerprints of listed individuals, to the Committee and similar biometric data concerning foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators to INTERPOL.**

70. In resolution 2396 (2017), the Security Council also emphasizes passenger name record (PNR) data, in addition to advance passenger information as an important tool and encourages Member States to share PNR data with relevant or concerned Member States to detect foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin or nationality or travelling or relocating to a third country. In paragraph 12, it furthermore encourages Member States to use PNR data to implement the travel ban

[114] Member State information.
[115] Member State information.
[116] S/2017/573, para. 91.

levied upon listed individuals on the sanctions list. The Team has been discussing the issue of PNR data with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) since 2013. The Team will continue its engagement with Member States, international organizations and associations, as well as private sector stakeholders, on this issue and will update the Committee on its findings in due course.

71. Following the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), the Team continued its engagement with Member States, ICAO, IATA and private sector stakeholders on the implementation of advance passenger information systems. The Team also actively takes part in workshops on advance passenger information organized by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. In October 2017, ICAO adopted advance passenger information as a new standard in annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.[117] The Team took an active part in the discussions during the adoption by the Council of ICAO. The adoption of advance passenger information as a global standard is a significant step to ensure that the flow of passenger data can be effectively utilized to implement the travel ban against listed individuals and to control the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators.

72. The Team also continued its cooperation with Members States concerning the implementation of the travel ban on land borders. In many cases, porous borders and the challenges associated with border management continue to hinder its effective implementation. Specifically, inadequate measures for screening against the sanctions list at land and maritime border points are likely to be exploited by foreign terrorist fighters using "broken travel routes"[118] while returning or relocating to other conflict zones. Additionally, some Member States have expressed concern that foreign terrorist fighters are exploiting the provisions for free movement of persons in some regional economic blocs to ease their movement. Information sharing remains a key mitigating measure in this regard.

73. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the risk that porous land and maritime borders present for the travel of listed individuals, foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators and encourage those that have not yet done so, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to put in place appropriate border control management measures, such as bilateral or regional border control information sharing mechanisms, to address this issue.**

74. As indicated in the previous report (see S/2017/573, para. 92) the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has developed a new Migration Information and Data Analysis System. This system is currently operational in 19 countries, mostly in Africa. Although not intended as a border control system, advance passenger information data and INTERPOL notices and databases, as well as other border management systems, can be integrated into the system. Several Member States operate the system not only at their international borders but also in refugee and displaced persons camps. Given the growing importance of this tool, the Team will continue to engage with Member States, as well as IOM, to collect additional information on its technical features in order to give an overview to the Committee in one of its update briefings as mandated in paragraph 99 of resolution 2368 (2017).

[117] International Civil Aviation Organization, International Standards and Recommended Practices, Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Facilitation, 15th edition (October 2017), p. 67. Available from www.iacm.gov.mz/doc/ICAO/an_09_Facilitation_15ed_October%202017_rev.26.pdf.

[118] The term "broken travel routes" refers to foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators using more than one mode of transport during their international travel, such as combining air travel with travel by vehicle or ship.

B. Asset freeze

75. The Team continues to cooperate with Member States and with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in particular their joint Global Container Control Programme, to raise awareness of the strategic role of customs agencies for the implementation of the assets freeze relating to the international movement of goods and currency, as well as the arms embargo. In November 2017, UNODC briefed the Committee on the programme.

76. During visits to Member States, the Team continued to highlight the importance of effective communication and information sharing between customs and relevant law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies. In this regard, the Team encourages Member States to participate in the Global Container Control Programme. The Programme allows Member States to implement domestic cross-agency information sharing in a structured way. The core element of the programme is the creation of inter-agency port control units,[119] staffed by personnel from different law enforcement agencies, including customs, police and intelligence agencies.

77. Port control unit officers are equipped and trained to better identify and inspect high-risk containers through risk analysis and other profiling techniques, using all available information. The inter-agency units are also equipped to exchange information with counterparts in other countries, using a secure communication application developed by WCO called ContainerCOMM.

78. During visits to Member States, the Team noted that the cooperation between customs agencies and financial intelligence units is generally limited to separate analysis of the information obtained from declarations of currency and other financial instruments provided by customs agencies and in the suspicious transaction reports provided by the units. Those Member States that have established combined information flows highlighted that the combination of both information streams achieved markedly better results in the fight against terrorism financing and money-laundering.

79. One Member State created a joint permanent team of financial intelligence unit and customs experts which meets on a regular basis to process and analyse data on financial flows linked to the international trade of goods, in addition to data available in the currency declaration forms and in the suspicious transaction reports. Such joint analysis facilitates the identification of crimes, including terrorism financing and the movement of goods and currency related, directly or indirectly, to listed individuals and entities. In particular, both authorities could have a greater capacity to mitigate risks in areas significantly vulnerable to terrorism financing and illicit trade of artefacts and other luxury goods at free zones or ports.

80. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to encourage those that have not yet done so, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to explore measures, such as creating a joint permanent team of financial intelligence unit and customs experts, to enhance the sharing of information and joint analyses, including on financial flows linked to international trade of goods, between customs agencies and financial intelligence units.**

81. During the reporting period, the Team continued its outreach to private sector stakeholders in the financial industry. In October 2017, the Team participated for the first time in a conference co-hosted by the Union of Arab Banks, the Federal Reserve

[119] Port control units have also been created in several airports

Bank of New York and the International Monetary Fund, which was held at the headquarters of the Federal Reserve Bank. The Team highlighted the sanctions regime as a key tool in the global fight against terrorism financing and outlined its current threat assessment concerning the changing aspects of ISIL financing activities following its military setbacks in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. The participants highlighted the importance of such a direct exchange for their work mitigating the risk of ISIL and Al-Qaida financing, in particular as far as correspondent banking relationships are concerned, and for their efforts to increase the vigilance of financial institutions to secure the flow of transactions from and into the conflict zones while mitigating the risk of misuse by ISIL and Al-Qaida. The Team is currently discussing with the Union of Arab Banks the possibility of a more specialized in-depth and structured follow-up dialogue.

C. Arms embargo

82. The flow of arms and ammunition to listed individuals and entities remains a concern for Member States, and preventing the flow of legitimate arms from being diverted and misused by terrorist groups is a challenge for both the private sector and Member State authorities. One Member State explained that some manufacturers took direct control of their own overseas deliveries, sending personnel to travel on the vessels transporting the arms. However, Member States also highlighted that arms in conflict zones are sold across front lines and between groups. Therefore, ensuring that the intended recipient does not divert material remains of paramount importance.

83. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States encouraging those that have not yet done so, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to raise awareness among relevant weapon manufacturers of the risk of diversion of delivered arms and ammunitions to terrorist organizations and the implementation of detailed and in-depth know-your-customer procedures as a tool to mitigate this risk.**

84. The Team continues to actively participate in various global expert forums concerning improvised explosive devices. Member States highlighted to the Team that most improvised explosive devices components used in terror attacks have been supplied and assembled locally or regionally. Therefore, information sharing between intelligence and law enforcement authorities, including customs agencies, within Member States and between Member States on the issue of improvised explosive device components is a crucial tool to mitigate this threat.

85. Programme Global Shield [20] is aimed at reducing the ability of terrorists to obtain materials to design improvised explosive devices. The programme works on enhancing the ability of customs and relevant border control agencies to monitor licit movements of chemicals and components used by terrorists to manufacture improvised explosive devices and to counter illicit diversion and trafficking. Currently, 94 countries participate in the programme and are connected via a secure communications application to exchange information on suspicious shipments and to report seizures. While the initial geographical focus of the programme was the Central Asian region, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, it is now expanding to Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia.

86. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to encourage those that have not yet done so, and, in accordance with their national laws and regulations, to share information on materials used by terrorists with Programme Global Shield in order to ensure that the global**

[20] PGS was started in 2010 by WCO with the support of INTERPOL and UNODC.

monitoring efforts of these materials can be updated accordingly. In addition, the Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to encourage those that have not yet done so to participate in the programme.

87. Member States continue to express concerns about the misuse of commercially available drones by terrorist groups, in particular following the extensive use of drones by ISIL (see S/2017/573, paras. 18 and 96). Some Member States have implemented controls on the import and trading of such equipment. However, the unregulated global trade of drones via the Internet was highlighted as a potential security risk.[121]

D. Sanctions list

88. During the reporting period, Member States from a greater range of regions actively engaged in the process to list individuals and entities associated with ISIL and Al-Qaida, and, on the basis of those proposals, eight individuals and five entities have been added to the sanctions list, including several high-profile ISIL foreign terrorist fighters and key ISIL and Al-Qaida facilitators and financiers. At the same time, through active engagement with Member States, the quality of the current list entries has also been substantively improved. While the list remains the core operational instrument for the implementation of the sanctions measures imposed by the regime, it is also increasingly becoming a strategic document which reflects the changing threat posed by ISIL and Al-Qaida. The Secretariat continues to update the Team on the development of the enhanced data model, pursuant to paragraph 48 of resolution 2253 (2015).

89. Currently, biometric information for listed individuals is transmitted only via INTERPOL-United Nations Security Council Special Notices. The distribution of such data is therefore limited to those authorities within Member States that have access to data provided by INTERPOL. Transmission of biometric data, in particular, pictures, via the list, would enable a wider range of authorities, as well as private sector stakeholders, to access this information.

90. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee instruct the Secretariat, to explore, in cooperation with the Monitoring Team, technical possibilities as to how biometric data, in particular pictures of listed individuals, could be made available via the sanctions list, specifically for implementers using a printed copy of the list to undertake screening.**

V. Monitoring team activities and feedback

91. Between June and December 2017, the Team conducted 20 country and technical visits. It continued to promote the sanctions regime through its participation in 42 international conferences, meetings and workshops, including those of UNODC, the European Union, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union Commission and the International Peace Support Training Centre. The Team is also an official observer in the Counter ISIL Finance Group and participates in the FTF working group of the Global Coalition Against Da'esh.

[121] Member State information

92. The Team held two regional meetings of intelligence and security services focusing on the threat posed by ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities in South-East Asia and West Africa. The Team raised awareness among the participating services concerning the potential use of the sanctions regime as an integral part of a national counter-terrorism strategy and encouraged more intensive sharing of information in the region to counter the threat. During the reporting period, no Member State provided the Team with specific information demonstrating that ISIL directly engages in the trafficking of persons and sexual violence as a means to generate income for the group.

93. The Team continued its engagement with entities and associations in the financial, energy, antiquities trading and information and communications technology (ICT) sectors. During the reporting period, the Team continued to engage private sector stakeholders in the ICT sector and participated in several workshops and a special meeting organized by the ICT for Peace Foundation, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and UNODC. During these events, the Team raised awareness of the provisions of the sanctions regime and the sanctions list. The Team cooperates closely with the Executive Directorate in the production of mandated reports of the Secretary-General (see resolution 2368 (2017), para. 101). The Team remains an active member of the working groups of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, participating in its working groups.

94. The UNODC Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, in cooperation with the Team, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and INTERPOL, developed a dedicated three-day training course on ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and 1988 sanctions regimes. As part of the pilot phase of the project, two train-the-trainer events were organized by OSCE and the Global Programme, with the active participation of the Team. The first full training course was held in Bishkek from 12 to 15 December 2017. Fifteen Kyrgyz officers from various government agencies participated in the training. The United States of America and the Russian Federation provided voluntary financial contributions for the development and delivery of the project. The Team also remains an active participant in workshops of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC focusing on the prevention and countering of dual-use of chemical materials dedicated to Iraq and attended the first expert group meeting on improvised explosive devices, chaired by the Terrorism Prevention Branch and the Global Programme, held from 28 to 30 November 2017 in Vienna.

95. The Team welcomes feedback on the present report through 1267mt@un.org.

Annex

Litigation by or relating to individuals and entities on the sanctions list

1. The legal challenges involving individuals and entities on the sanctions list, or whose names the Committee has removed therefrom, that are known to be pending or to have been recently concluded are described below.

Pakistan

2. The action brought by the Al Rashid Trust (QDe.005) regarding the application of the sanctions measures against it remains pending in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, on appeal by the Government of an adverse decision in 2003. A similar challenge brought by Al-Akhtar Trust International (QDe.121) remains pending before a provincial high court.[1]

3. In addition to the two cases mentioned above, a trustee of Pakistan Relief Foundation (listed as an alias of Al-Akhtar Trust International (QDe.121)) has challenged the freezing of his bank account.[2]

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

4. The United Kingdom is defending judicial review challenges to its decision-making with regard to the designations under this sanctions regime of Abdulbasit Abdulrahim, Abdulbaqi Mohammed Khaled and Maftah Mohamed Elmabruk (all delisted). The cases are currently proceeding with hearings related to the use of closed evidence.[3]

[1] Information provided by Pakistan.
[2] Information provided by Pakistan.
[3] Information provided by the United Kingdom.

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The situation in the Middle East

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Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 28 December 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I transmit to you herewith a statistical summary of Israeli violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) committed during the month of November 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Hasan **Abbas**
Charge d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the identical letters dated 28 December 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Land violations committed in November 2017

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
3 November	—	Opposite the town of Blida, Israeli enemy forces used a trench digger to clear brush near point BP28. As they carried out this work, the trench digger's boom breached the technical fence and the Blue Line, extending towards Lebanese territory over an area approximately 7 metres deep and 4 metres wide.
8 November	1315	Inside the occupied Shab'a Farms, on the outskirts of the town opposite Birkat al-Naqqar where the Israeli enemy soldiers were abducted in 2000 during a resistance operation, some 50 civilian family members and relatives of those soldiers arrived in a bus in order to commemorate the anniversary of the abduction. They were accompanied by three Hummer vehicles and several soldiers, who took up combat positions along the perimeter of the area. Meanwhile, four Merkava tanks were deployed on the hills opposite the location. At 1430 hours, everyone left and headed to occupied territory.
10 November	1100	Inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite the Shaykh Abbad point, an Israeli enemy patrol comprising a Hummer vehicle arrived. Three soldiers disembarked while those who remained inside pointed the machine gun mounted on the vehicle towards Lebanese territory. At 1115 hours, they left and headed towards occupied territory.
	1150	Outside of the town of Shab'a, in the district of Jabal al-Shabal, Khallah al-Wasi'ah, as the herder As'ad Hamdan was tending to a herd of livestock, an Israeli enemy patrol crossed some 50 metres beyond the line of withdrawal (the portion of the Blue Line to which a claim is maintained in that area) and attempted unsuccessfully to abduct the herder, who fled with his herd toward the town of Shab'a. The enemy patrol fired their weapons in the air but did not injure anyone.
	1310	Inside the occupied Shab'a Farms, opposite Birkat Ba'tha'il, a six-person Israeli enemy foot patrol fired shots into the air.
11 November	1105	An Israeli enemy patrol comprising a Defender vehicle and a Humvee vehicle arrived opposite the town of Blida. Six soldiers disembarked from the vehicles and pointed their weapons towards the personnel of the Lebanese army Bi'r Shu'ayb checkpoint. They left in the direction of occupied territory at 1215 hours.
	1300	Inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite point BP82 and the town of Blida, an Israeli enemy patrol comprising two Hummer vehicles and two Defender vehicles threatened a Lebanese army patrol that was on the outskirts of the town of Blida, inside Lebanese territory. The enemy patrol told the Lebanese army patrol personnel that they must leave the area and that if they failed to do so, the enemy patrol would fire smoke bombs at them. When the Lebanese patrol ignored those orders, the enemy patrol fired three smoke bombs, two of which fell in Lebanese

Date	Time	Nature of violation
		territory and the other in occupied Palestinian territory, between the technical fence and the Blue Line. Two soldiers who experienced difficulty in breathing as a result of smoke inhalation were transported to Mays al-Jabal Hospital, where they were treated and then discharged. The enemy patrol left in the direction of occupied territory at 1430 hours.
12 November	1015	As the herder Isma'il Zahrah was tending to a herd of livestock in the Bastra Farm on the outskirts of Kafr Shuba, near the location of the concrete blocks that were placed along the entrance to the occupied Shab'a Farms, a three-person enemy patrol crossed some 25 metres past the line of withdrawal (the portion of the Blue Line to which a claim is maintained in that area) and attempted unsuccessfully to abduct him. The herder fled with his herd towards the town of Kafr Shuba. The patrol left in the direction of occupied territory at 1025 hours.
13 November	1450	As the civilian As'ad Hamdan was tending to a herd of livestock on the outskirts of Shab'a town, in Shahal, Khallat al-Wasi'ah locality, near the line of withdrawal (the portion of the Blue Line to which a claim is maintained in that area), an Israeli enemy foot patrol fired at him from inside the occupied Shab'a Farms, but they failed to hit him.
20 November	0800	Inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite the town of Ayta al-Sha'b, Israeli enemy forces, accompanied by an enemy patrol comprising two Hummer vehicles and 10 soldiers, used two trench diggers and a D9 bulldozer to clear brush and trees between points B30 and B30 (1). In the course of this work, the enemy forces crossed the technical fence but did not breach the Blue Line. Another patrol, comprising a Defender vehicle, arrived at the location. Three soldiers disembarked from the vehicle, crossed the technical fence and pointed their weapons at Lebanese army personnel, who were inside Lebanese territory, startling them. The patrol and vehicles left in the direction of occupied territory at 1645 hours.
	0830	Inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite the town of Ayta al-Sha'b, Israeli enemy forces, accompanied by two Hummer vehicles, used two trench diggers to clear brush and trees between points B30 and B30 (1). In the course of this work, the trench digger crossed the technical fence and breached the Blue Line, extending itself towards Lebanese territory over an area approximately 10 metres deep and 1 to 4 metres wide. At 1630 hours, the Israeli enemy finished its work and the vehicles left in the direction of occupied territory.
22 November	0800	As Israeli enemy forces were clearing brush and trees between points B30 and B30 (1) inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite the town of Ayta al-Sha'b, an enemy patrol comprising a Defender vehicle arrived. Four soldiers disembarked and took up combat positions, and one of the soldiers pointed his weapon at a Lebanese army patrol that was on the other side.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
23 November	0800	As Israeli enemy forces were clearing brush and trees between points B30 and B30 (1) inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite the town of Ayta al-Sha'b, an enemy patrol comprising a Defender vehicle arrived. Four soldiers disembarked and took up combat positions, and one of the soldiers pointed his weapon at a Lebanese army patrol that was on the other side.
26 November	1600	Several Israeli enemy soldiers directed vulgar language and obscene gestures at some civilians who were taking photographs at the Panorama point on the Lebanese-Palestinian border. They left in the direction of occupied territory at 1615 hours.
27 November	0730	Opposite the towns of Ramya and Ayta al-Sha'b and points BP11-2 and B30, an Israeli enemy patrol comprising three trench diggers and four personnel, accompanied by three Hummer vehicles and 20 soldiers, crossed the technical fence from inside occupied Palestinian territory and cleared some brush and trees and reconnoitered the area. In the course of this work, one of the trench diggers pushed three boulders towards Lebanese territory and crossed the Blue Line, coming to a halt in a parcel of land belonging to the civilian Musa Surur. At 1600 hours, the Israeli enemy finished its work and the patrol and the vehicles left in the direction of occupied territory.
29 November	1135	Inside occupied Palestinian territory, at the Ayta al-Sha'b west position, a 10-person Israeli enemy patrol installed a piece of camouflage netting three metres long and two metres wide. One of the soldiers pointed his weapon at personnel manning the Fifth Infantry Brigade position at Ruwaysat al-Hadab. Those personnel responded by taking up combat positions. The enemy patrol left in the direction of occupied territory at 1325 hours.
30 November	1238	As municipal workers were building a farm road near the line of withdrawal on the outskirts of the town of Kafr Shuba, Azrayin district, a three-person enemy patrol crossed some 50 metres past the line of withdrawal (the portion of the Blue Line to which a claim is maintained in that area) and observed and photographed the municipal workers in the presence of a patrol from the Indian contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. They left in the direction of occupied territory at 1300 hours.
	1445	Israeli enemy soldiers directed vulgar language and obscene gestures at some civilians who were taking photographs at the Panorama point on the Lebanon-occupied Palestine border. The patrol left in the direction of occupied territory at 1510 hours.

Sea violations committed in November 2017

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
2 November	0946	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) of 1 October 2011 for a two-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 200 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
5 November	0525	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for an eight-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 240 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	0745	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 120 metres. A crew member of the above-mentioned launch released an explosive charge near the second buoy and spoke in Hebrew over loudspeakers, directing insults and threats at a Lebanese fishing vessel that was inside Lebanese territorial waters. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
6 November	2124	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from its Ra's al-Naqurah position towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of 10 seconds.
7 November	0517	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 240 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
8 November	1642	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a one-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 150 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1730	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) of 1 October 2011 for a two-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 200 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1739	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of three minutes.
	1740	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a one-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 200 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1800	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for one minute and released an explosive charge.
	1800	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 350 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
9 November	1737	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 205 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
10 November	0100	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of 20 seconds.
	0200	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 280 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	0240	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of 20 seconds.
	0255	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 280 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
11 November	1150	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011), proceeding some 220 metres over a two-minute period before leaving in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
12 November	0825	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011), proceeding some 300 metres over a two-minute period before leaving in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0923 hours, the launch violated the boundary again for a seven-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 450 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
13 November	1658	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a six-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 150 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
14 November	0640	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for an 11-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 300 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0923 hours, the launch violated the boundary again for a 13-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 335 metres. It then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0758 hours, the launch violated the boundary once again for a two-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 225 metres. It then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0900 hours, the violated the boundary yet again for a two-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 260 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1055	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a nine-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 260 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
15 November	0646	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 10-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 295 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
16 November	0728	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 185 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0745 hours, the launch violated the boundary again for a 12-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 185 metres. It then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 1043 hours, the launch violated the boundary yet again for a four-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 335 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1552	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 205 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
17 November	0005 0010	Inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, the crew of an Israeli enemy military launched three flare shells over Lebanese territorial waters.
	0440	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from its Ra's al-Naqurah position towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of 10 minutes.
	0445	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from its Ra's al-Naqurah position towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of 30 seconds.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	0447	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from its Ra's al-Naqurah position towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of one minute.
	0510	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for 30 seconds and released an explosive charge.
	0750	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 445 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1555	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) of 1 October 2011 for a two-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 200 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
19 November	0513	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 295 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0515 hours, inside Palestinian territorial waters, the crew of the above-mentioned Israeli enemy military vessel launched a flare shell over Lebanese territorial waters and sounded warning sirens for a 15-second period. At 0518 hours, the launch violated the boundary again for a two-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 275 metres. It then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0747 hours, that launch violated the boundary yet again for a 10-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 220 metres. It then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
20 November	1145	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a four-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 260 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
24 November	0527	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 13-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 390 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0700 hours, it violated the boundary again for a two-minute period and proceeded on its way for some 60 metres. It also released an explosive charge in Lebanese territorial waters. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 0742 hours, it violated the boundary yet again, for a one-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 70 metres. It also released an explosive charge in Lebanese territorial waters. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
25 November	1055	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 370 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
26 November	0825	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 30-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 590 metres. In that time, warning sirens were sounded for a 10-second period and announcements were made in Hebrew. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1123	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a four-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 90 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1135	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 13-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 240 metres while towing the so-called tenth buoy. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1252	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011), proceeding on its way for some 295 metres. At 1305 hours, another launch violated the above-mentioned boundary. They proceeded to install a new buoy to the north of the buoy that had been towed some 425 metres. At 1317 hours, both launches left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1322	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 29-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 275 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1350	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a nine-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 275 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
27 November	1512	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a four-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 315 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
28 November	0324	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a seven-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 280 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1620	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 225 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	2100	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a four-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 150 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
30 November	1139	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a two-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 255 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1203	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 23-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 740 metres while towing the so-called tenth buoy. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1223	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a seven-minute period, proceeding on its way for some 240 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.

Air violations committed in November 2017

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 November	0830	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. They headed north and then circled over Jubayl, the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 0950 hours over Alma al Sha'b.
	0845	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Naqurah. It circled over Baalbek and Riyaq before leaving at 2030 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1230	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They headed north as far as Tripoli and then circled over the Western Bekaa, the North and the South before leaving at 1345 hours over the sea to the west of Naqurah.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1600	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over Baalbek and Riyaq before leaving at 2145 hours over Rumaysh.
	2020	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the South before leaving on 2 November 2017 at 1040 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2055	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering from over the sea off Tyre. They headed north towards the capital, Beirut, then to the north-east as far as the Irz area, then west as far as the Batrun area and then south. They disappeared from radar screens at 2115 hours. At 2130 hours, the sound of several explosions inside Syrian territory was heard as hostile warplanes attacked Syrian army sites in the Hisya' area, Homs governorate.
	2105	Four Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace and headed east as far as Baalbek. They disappeared from radar screens at 2120 hours.
2 November	1200	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South, Zahlah, Matn and Ba'abda before leaving at 2145 hours over Naqurah.
	1430	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Yarun and heading north. They left at 1440 hours over the sea to the west of Tripoli, heading towards Turkey.
	1505	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Yarun. They headed north, reaching the sea to the west Shikka before leaving at 1525 hours over the sea to the west of Naqurah.
	1720	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving on 3 November 2017 at 0140 hours over Rumaysh.
3 November	0125	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It headed north, proceeding as far as Bint Jubayl, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0715 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0800	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It headed north, proceeding as far as Tyre, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0715 hours over Kafr Killa, as far as Tyre and then circled over the South before leaving at 1125 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0805	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It headed north, proceeding as far as Sarafand, and then circled over the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 1615 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
4 November	0640	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the Shuf and the South before leaving on 5 November 2017 at 0110 hours over Rumaysh.
	0830	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 1900 hours over Naqurah.
5 November	0805	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 1905 hours over Rumaysh.
	1300	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Yarun. They circled between Shikka and the South before leaving at 1505 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
6 November	0935	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs, as well as Ba'abda, before leaving at 1900 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	1100	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They proceeded north as far as western Tripoli and then headed south to a point west of Shikka. They left at 1115 hours over the sea west of Shikka, heading towards Turkey.
	1120	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off west of Tripoli. They circled over the South and the North before leaving at 1150 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1850	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea west of Naqurah. It headed north-east, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0905 hours on 7 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
7 November	0910	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Shuba. It headed north, proceeding as far as Jubb Jannin, and then circled over the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 1100 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0915	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far as Zahlah, and then circled over Zahlah, Dahr al-Baydar, the Western Bekaa and the South before leaving at 1630 hours over Naqurah.
	1015	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They proceeded north as far as western Tripoli and then circled over the sea opposite Tripoli and Shikka. They left at 1040 hours over the sea west of Tripoli, heading towards Turkey.
	1050	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far Baalbek, and then circled over Baalbek and Riyaq before leaving at 1215 hours over Kafr Killa.

Date	Time	Nature of violation
	1110	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea west of Naqurah and heading north-east. The aircraft then proceeded north as far as Shikka. They circled over the South and the North before leaving at 1145 hours over Aytarun.
	1205	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It headed north, proceeding as far as Sarafand, and then circled over the South, Beirut and its suburbs, the Shuf, Ba'abda, Bisharri, Batrun and Jubayl before leaving at 1755 hours over Naqurah.
	1225	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far Baalbek, and then circled over Baalbek and Riyaq before leaving at 1915 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1605	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It headed north, proceeding as far as Tyre, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0555 hours on 8 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2220	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1245 hours on 8 November over Rumaysh.
8 November	0755	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq and Zahlah before leaving at 1530 hours over Kafr Killa.
	2300	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0745 hours on 9 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
9 November	1015	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 1420 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1400	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the Shuf and the South before leaving at 1800 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1915	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. It circled over the South before leaving at 2300 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2240	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 0640 hours on 10 November over Rumaysh.
10 November	0730	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 1225 hours over Yarun.
	0835	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Zahlah, Matn and Ba'abda before leaving at 1130 hours over Kafr Killa.

Date	Time	Nature of violation
	0920	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 2020 hours over Naqurah.
	0930	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1115 hours over Rumaysh.
	1215	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 2010 hours over Rumaysh.
	2015	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0150 hours on 11 November over Rumaysh.
11 November	0145	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Marj Uyun, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0820 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0815	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Tyre, and then circled over the South before leaving at 1340 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1330	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It headed north, proceeding as far as Juwayya, and then circled over the South before leaving at 2000 hours over Rumaysh.
	1955	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 0730 hours on 12 November over Rumaysh.
12 November	0725	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South, Zahlah, Matn and Ba'abda before leaving at 1540 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1430	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. They proceeded north as far as Irz and then headed west to western Shikka before turning south. The warplanes left at 1455 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1440	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the Western Bekaa and the South before leaving at 2015 hours over Rumaysh.
	2010	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0035 hours on 13 November over Rumaysh.

Date	Time	Nature of violation
13 November	0035	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1115 hours over Rumaysh.
	0750	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea west of Naqurah. It circled over Baalbek and Riyaq before leaving at 2200 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1040	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0635 hours on 14 November over Rumaysh.
	1610	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0710 hours on 14 November over Rumaysh.
14 November	0700	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek, Hirmil and the South before leaving at 1955 hours over Rumaysh.
	0720	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 1210 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0900	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 2255 hours over Rumaysh.
	2110	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Hirmil, Baalbek and Riyaq before leaving at 0630 hours on 15 November over Kafr Killa.
15 November	0055	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0650 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0635	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South before leaving at 1320 hours over Naqurah.
	0800	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far Hirmil, and then circled over Riyaq, Baalbek, Hirmil and the North before leaving at 1515 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1450	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South, Riyaq and Zahlah before leaving at 2045 hours over Yarun.
	1755	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They headed north, proceeding as far as Beirut, and then circled between Shikka and the South before leaving at 2000 hours over Naqurah.

Date	Time	Nature of violation
	2025	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0320 hours on 16 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
16 November	0630	An Israel enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 0715 hours over Naqurah.
	0740	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut, Ba'abda and Matn before leaving at 1440 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	0940	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They left at 0955 hours over the sea opposite Tripoli, heading towards Turkey.
	1240	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea opposite Naqurah. It circled over Ba'abda, Beirut and its suburbs, Baalbek, Hirmil and the South before leaving at 2300 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2240	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Yarun. It circled over the South before leaving at 0545 hours on 17 November over Yarun.
17 November	0535	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0910 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0800	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs, Ba'abda and the South before leaving at 1630 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0905	An Israel enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 1530 hours over Rumaysh.
	1820	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 2040 hours over Rumaysh.
	1945	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 0900 hours on 18 November over Rumaysh.
18 November	0915	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0120 hours on 19 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2320	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It headed north, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0245 hours on 19 November over Rumaysh.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
19 November	0945	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They proceeded north as far as Tripoli and then circled over all regions of Lebanon. The warplanes left at 1040 hours over Rumaysh.
	1000	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far as Jubb Jannin, and then circled over the Western Bekaa the South before leaving at 1605 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1650	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It headed north, proceeding as far as Hirmil, and circled over Riyaq, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 0215 hours on 20 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1735	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. it headed north, proceeding as far as Tyre, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0640 hours on 20 November over Rumaysh.
20 November	0550	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 0945 hours over Naqurah.
21 November	1905	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They proceeded north as far as Marj Uyun before leaving at 1910 hours over Rumaysh.
	1935	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2050 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
22 November	1030	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over Shikka and the South before leaving at 1205 hours over Kafr Killa.
25 November	0810	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1420 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0850	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyqa, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 1135 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1525	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 0700 hours on 26 November over Alma al-Sha'b.
26 November	0900	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1600 hours over Rumaysh.
	1900	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over Shikka and the South before leaving at 2005 hours over Naqurah.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
27 November	1300	An Israeli enemy agricultural aircraft violated Lebanese airspace opposite the town of Kafr Killa and then dropped a suspicious object over that town. It left at 1310 hours, heading towards occupied Palestinian territory.
	1645	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Nabatiyah, and then circled over the South before leaving at 2340 hours over Rumaysh.
	2355	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It headed north, proceeding as far as Bint Jubayl, and then circled over the South before leaving at 0530 hours on 28 November over Rumaysh.
28 November	0520	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. It circled over the South before disappearing from radar screens over Bint Jubayl at 0830 hours.
	1130	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Wazzani. It circled over Wazzani before leaving at 1200 hours, heading towards occupied Palestinian territory.
	1440	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled between Jubayl and the South before leaving at 1515 hours over Naqurah.
	1650	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 2215 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1705	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. It circled over the South before leaving at 2115 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2135	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 2235 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2230	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before disappearing from radar screens over Bint Jubayl at 0400 hours on 29 November.
29 November	1545	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1955 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1925	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South, Zahlah, Matn and Ba'abda before leaving at 1015 hours on 30 November over Rumaysh.
	2030	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2215 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
30 November	0915	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the South, the Western Bekaa, Riyaq, Baalbek and Hirmil before leaving at 1650 hours over Rumaysh.
	1200	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over the South before leaving at 1230 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1715	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South, Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 0735 hours on 1 December 2017 over Alma al-Sha'b.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 52 of Security Council resolution 2348 (2017). It covers major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the issuance of my previous report, of 2 October (S/2017/824). The report describes progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); provides an overview of political developments following my report of 17 November on the implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement of 31 December 2016 (see S/2017/963); and provides a report on the performance of MONUSCO uniformed personnel.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. Deep divisions among political and civil society actors have continued to characterize the political climate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the reporting period. On 5 November, the Independent National Electoral Commission published an electoral calendar officially postponing the presidential and legislative elections scheduled to take place by December 2017, in accordance with the agreement of 31 December 2016, until 23 December 2018. This prompted renewed calls for demonstrations against the President, Joseph Kabila, and the Government by most opposition leaders and several civil society organizations. On 15 and 30 November and 19 December, however, these calls were only marginally followed in urban centres across the country, as authorities continued to impose a ban on public demonstrations and to deploy the security forces prior to public protests. On 31 December, national security forces violently dispersed demonstrations called for by the Secular Coordination Committee in Kinshasa and other cities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in at least 5 deaths, 46 people wounded and over 140 arrests. The call of the Committee for protests to demand the full implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016, including confidence-building measures, to reject the electoral calendar and to urge President Kabila not to run for office on 23 December 2018 was supported by the Catholic Church and opposition groups. In contrast, both the President's Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la democratie

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and the Government appears determined to proceed with the implementation of the electoral calendar.

3. On 7 November, President Kabila led a meeting of the leadership of his party to discuss its approach and strategy for the upcoming elections. On 14 November, the Government swiftly endorsed two draft bills critical for the holding of elections. The first is the 2018 finance bill, subsequently adopted by parliament on 14 December, which allocates a total of $619 million for the organization of elections, of which $532 million is to be disbursed to the Independent National Electoral Commission. The second is the electoral law, adopted by parliament on 15 December, despite the protests of the opposition and a few members of parliament belonging to the ruling majority, who lamented that the bill would reduce the likelihood of small political parties and independent candidates gaining seats in the future legislative elections. Women's organizations also protested that the electoral bill did not improve women's chances of being elected in parliament, including by rejecting a proposal to ensure that women hold 30 per cent of the seats at the end of the upcoming legislative elections; a percentage which remains below the full parity enshrined in the Constitution. On 24 December, President Kabila signed both bills.

4. On a related note, and in an apparent effort to help improve the pre-electoral climate, on 21 November, the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process announced that it was working towards the release of additional political prisoners. The Council is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016 and is led by Joseph Olenghankoy, an opposition figure. The body stated that it would follow up on the situation of five political figures, who have become targets of judicial proceedings, political prisoners or under the heavy surveillance of the security services. The Council also called on the Government to respect people's right to hold protests and their freedom of movement, in compliance with the Constitution. Lastly, the Council called on all political actors to preserve peace during the pre-electoral period.

5. On 27 November, the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo urged President Kabila to announce publicly that, in conformity with the Constitution, he would not seek a third term in office and urged him to support the implementation of the confidence-building measures required by the agreement of 31 December 2016. The Conference stressed the need for the Independent National Electoral Commission to remain independent and recommended that all political parties use only democratic means as they compete for public office. Lastly, the Conference called on civil society groups to remain apolitical and urged the international community to provide logistical and financial support to the electoral process.

6. During the reporting period, progress towards the implementation of the confidence-building measures has remained insufficient. In November, in response to calls by the opposition and civil society groups for public protests across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the authorities reiterated the general ban on opposition demonstrations, which has been in place since September 2016. During the protests of 30 November, one person was killed, 18 were injured and 185 were arrested in various incidents between protesters and security forces across the country. Opposition leaders arrested prior to or on the day of the protests have since been released.

7. Meanwhile, voter registration proceeded in Kasai and Kasai Central provinces as well as two territories in Lomami Province, with support from MONUSCO. As at early December, the Independent National Electoral Commission reported more than 45 million registered voters countrywide. Despite reassurances by the Commission, it is unlikely that voter registration will be completed by the end of January 2018.

Women constitute 47 per cent of registered voters, a decrease as compared with previous electoral cycles (52 per cent for 2006 and 2011). In the aforementioned provinces and territories, the registration of women has to date been even lower, owing to the security situation. With MONUSCO support, the Commission and local authorities are taking steps to increase the registration of women in the Kasai region.

8. Following the publication of the electoral calendar, discussions have resumed between the Independent National Electoral Commission and international partners regarding the funding of the *Projet d'appui au cycle électoral au Congo*, a multi-partner basket fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme. The fund has remained funded at only 6 per cent of the $123.3 million initially identified, in part owing to donor concerns regarding uncertainties surrounding the political transition.

9. On 6 November, the Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo convened the inaugural meeting of the joint team of electoral experts, as agreed on the margins of the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in September. The team's main task is to support the Independent National Electoral Commission. It comprises experts of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Southern Africa Development Community.

10. At the regional level, on 7 November, the African Union Peace and Security Council reiterated its commitment to support the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and urged its member States and partners to provide their support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the successful completion of the electoral process. On 9 December, President Kabila, the President of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, and the President of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, met in Brazzaville to discuss the situation in the region, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, they called on political actors to preserve peace and work towards the holding of elections.

11. MONUSCO continues to support the implementation of the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. On 22 November, my Special Representative, together with my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, attended a meeting of representatives of the Framework guarantors and the region in Addis Ababa to review preparations for elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and discuss coordinated regional and international support. The guarantors reaffirmed their commitment to support a democratic and peaceful transition through credible elections and called on all stakeholders to create the necessary conditions for the holding of timely, peaceful and credible elections.

B. Economic developments

12. The downward macroeconomic trend persisted. Inflation remained high and the Congolese franc has depreciated by 30 per cent since January 2017. The exchange rate increased to 1,614 Congolese francs to the dollar in early December, from 1,560 at the end of July. On 2 November, the Banque centrale du Congo lowered its year-end inflation forecast to 49.8 per cent, from an earlier estimate of more than 52 per cent. The institution cautioned that any loosening of the tight monetary policy and austerity measures could trigger a renewed acceleration of inflation.

C. Security situation

13. During the reporting period, the security situation continued to deteriorate across various areas of the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while some measure of stability was noted in most of the western part of the country despite persistent tensions in the Kasai region.

14. In the East, the reporting period was tragically marked by the deadliest ever attack by an armed group against United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 7 December, in Semuliki, North Kivu, which resulted in the killing of 15 peacekeepers from Tanzania. Forty-four peacekeepers were also injured during the attack, attributed to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). After a lull in their activities, ADF has resumed their attacks in the area, including against civilians. On 22 December, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence and Veterans' Affairs of Uganda issued a communiqué indicating that, on that day, the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF), following consultations with Congolese authorities, had conducted a "surgical attack" on ADF camps in Beni territory. UPDF reportedly conducted the strike on the ADF camps from Ugandan territory in the border area. On 27 December, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence and Veterans' Affairs of Uganda issued a statement, indicating that the 22 December strikes of UPDF had successfully targeted eight ADF camps, resulting in the deaths of some 100 ADF elements and several wounded. In addition, the trend of attacks by armed groups against the Congolese security forces has persisted, leading to more deadly clashes, particularly in the two Kivu provinces. This has taken place against the backdrop of an emergence of coalitions of Mai-Mai groups opposed to the Government. In North Kivu, the most important Mai-Mai platforms are the Mouvement national pour le renouveau, composed mainly of ethnic Nande-affiliated Mai-Mai groups, and the *Collectif des mouvements pour le changement* (CMC), comprising Hutu-affiliated Nyatura groups. In South Kivu, the Coalition nationale du peuple pour la souveraineté du Congo, led by Mai-Mai Yakutumba has so far rallied 11 armed groups. The coalition is also present in Tanganyika and Maniema provinces. Attacks by armed groups against the civilian population have persisted, as have clashes between armed groups. Inter-community tensions have also persisted in certain areas.

Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

15. In North Kivu, attacks by armed groups against security forces continued. On 3 October, in Kipese, Lubero territory, three soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) were killed during an exchange of fire with Mai-Mai combatants. On 4 October, the FARDC killed 10 Mai-Mai Mazembe in Kanyambi and Kitsambiro. On 6 October, a group of Mai-Mai attacked a FARDC position at Kawasewe, 35 km east of Butembo. One FARDC soldier was killed and three were wounded. On 11 October, a coalition of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda/Forces combattantes abacunguzi (FDLR-FOCA) and Nyatura attacked Bwiza, Rutshuru territory, killing three officers of the Congolese National Police and five civilians.

16. In a worrisome development, suspected members of ADF resumed their attacks against civilians and FARDC. On 7 October, suspected ADF killed 25 civilians on the road between Mbau and Kamango. The suspected ADF also launched a series of attacks against FARDC positions in and around the so-called ADF triangle area. On 26 and 27 October and 3 November, alleged ADF attacked FARDC positions north-east of Beni town. As a result of these attacks, in early November, FARDC deployed around 1,000 additional troops to the area.

17. On 6 October, a Mai-Mai group attacked a MONUSCO base in Mulo, Lubero territory. Two peacekeepers were wounded, three assailants were killed and one was injured. On 9 October, suspected ADF elements attacked a MONUSCO base in Mamudioma. A total of 2 peacekeepers from Tanzania were killed and 18 injured, one of whom died later from his injuries. On 7 December, in the most vicious attacks against United Nations peacekeepers in recent memory, suspected ADF elements killed 15 United Nations peacekeepers from Tanzania and injured 44 at their base in Semuliki, 40 km east of Beni, in North Kivu.

18. Also in North Kivu, in particular in Masisi and in Rutshuru territories, inter-ethnic tensions persisted. In Masisi, on 2 October, Nyatura clashed with members of the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain in Rubaya and took control of the village, displacing the local population. MONUSCO deployed to protect civilians and five Nyatura were captured by FARDC. In Rutshuru, on 16 October, growing tensions between Hutu and Nande resulted in 32 houses being set on fire in Bambo village. MONUSCO deployed and relocated 28 Nande residents as a precautionary measure.

19. In South Kivu, following their failed attempt to take over the city of Uvira at the end of September, thanks to the actions of MONUSCO and FARDC, members of Mai-Mai Yakutumba have remained active in the interior of the province, especially around the mining areas, and along the borders with Tanganyika and Maniema provinces. In late November, the group repeatedly clashed with FARDC soldiers, including on 26 November in Tujenge, 109 km south-west of Uvira. Two FARDC soldiers were killed. Clashes have also taken place between FARDC and a coalition of Mai-Mai groups in Makola, Maï-Ndombe and Kahungwe, all three villages located between 120 km and 130 km from Uvira.

20. In Tanganyika, attacks by armed groups have increased. Between 7 October and 14 November, members of Mai-Mai Yakutumba and their allies (Mai-Mai Malaika, Mai-Mai Apa Na Pole and Twa militias) staged nine attacks against civilians in Kalemie, Nyunzu and Kongolo territories, in which 15 FARDC soldiers and 9 civilians were killed; 4 FARDC and 13 civilians were injured.

21. In Haut-Katanga, the Twa-Luba conflict spilled over into Pweto territory, with intensified attacks against the civilian population and security forces. On 7 October, a Bantu militia known as the Tabwa attacked the prison in Pweto town, resulting in the escape of 55 prisoners, while reportedly killing three FARDC soldiers and wounding two others. On 16 October, local militia groups burned down offices of the Congolese National Police and the Agence nationale de renseignements in Fube, south of Moba. On 28 October, suspected Twa militia killed five civilians in Kalembe, west of Pweto. On 30 October, suspected Twa militia attacked a Luba militia in Kasanbala village, north-west of Moba, which resulted in civilians fleeing towards Zambia. On 1 November, Twa militia reportedly attacked civilians in Kansabala and Mwashi villages, north of Pweto. Two civilians were killed.

22. In Ituri Province, the Force de resistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) remained the main source of insecurity and posed the greatest threat to civilians, accounting for 80 per cent of human rights violations documented in the south of Irumu territory, including mass rape, summary executions and sexual assault. There was a sharp increase of FRPI attacks against the Congolese security forces, in which four FARDC soldiers were killed. FARDC and MONUSCO conducted two coordinated operations against FRPI in the south of Irumu territory in October and November, resulting in the killing of three FRPI elements.

23. In Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé provinces, activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have decreased as the poaching season in Garamba National Park has ended, although LRA still poses a threat to the civilian population. Mbororo herders'

activities continued to cause inter-community tensions as the movement of their cattle destroys crops, stoking conflict with local communities. Refugees continued to arrive in the area from both the Central African Republic and South Sudan, amid continued allegations of the infiltration of armed elements from South Sudan.

Western Democratic Republic of the Congo

24. In the Kasai region, attacks committed by Kamuina Nsapu militia have decreased, leading FARDC to halt major military operations. However, human rights violations and abuses continue to be recorded. During the reporting period, several cases of rape involving FARDC elements in the Kasai provinces were documented. On 26 October 2017, in Tshikapa, Kamonia territory, Kasai province, four women were raped by four FARDC soldiers. On 10 November 2017, three women were raped by two men in FARDC uniforms in Kakumba, also in Kamonia territory. On 30 November, MONUSCO received reports of mass killings in Kamonia territory, Kasai Province. MONUSCO investigation teams deployed to the area and verified that FARDC soldiers had shot at a crowd at the market in Kabeya Lumbu on 30 November, killing at least 13 persons, including 5 women. Eight other persons were injured by gunshots, including four women. Two of the injured later died. Across Kasai Province, Kamonia remains the main area of insecurity with a residual presence of Kamuina Nsapu militia and Bana Mura armed groups. The persistence of these community-based armed groups is compounding the divisions between Luba on one side and the Chokwe and Pende communities on the other. This is also hampering the return of internally displaced persons. Likewise, the persisting tensions among communities are slowing the pace of voter registration in Kasai Central and in Kasai.

25. In Kasai Central, most of the security incidents during the reporting period were attributed to security forces, including allegations of extrajudicial killings and sexual violence. On 13 November, in Kazumba territory, Kasai Central, an intoxicated FARDC soldier shot at a crowd, killing a man and injuring two other people. He was reportedly arrested.

Humanitarian situation

26. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to deteriorate. As at early December, 4.1 million people were internally displaced, including 866,000 women and 2.44 million children. Over 622,000 Congolese nationals have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including 100,000 this year. The country hosts more than half a million refugees from neighbouring Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan. Some 7.7 million people face severe food insecurity — a 30 per cent increase on the same time last year. An estimated 13.1 million people, including 6.8 million women and girls and 7.9 million children, will need protection and humanitarian assistance in 2018, an increase of 50 per cent as compared with 2017. In response, humanitarian partners are rapidly scaling up their efforts, with a focus on the Kasai, Tanganyika and South Kivu crises. On 20 October, the Emergency Relief Coordinator declared that the situation in these areas has reached its highest level of emergency, also known as level 3. Such a declaration is made when the aid system needs to scale up and respond to large-scale needs.

Human rights situation

27. MONUSCO documented 2,049 human rights violations from September to November, a significant increase as compared with the 1,329 documented from June to August. More than 70 per cent of these human rights violations occurred in conflict-affected provinces. While State agents were responsible for 1,293 violations, armed groups perpetrated 756. The increase in extrajudicial and arbitrary killings remains of

great concern. Of 710 victims recorded throughout the country, 284, including 47 women and 12 children, were killed by armed groups, and 426, including 38 women and 33 children, by State agents.

28. The trend of restrictions on the political space continued, with 482 violations linked to fundamental freedoms and political rights documented, almost double compared with 247 such violations in the previous reporting period. Almost all were committed by State agents (477, including 272 by the Congolese National Police and 91 by FARDC). Over 98 per cent of the perpetrators of these violations enjoyed impunity. Journalists, political opponents and civil society activists were the main targets of such violations.

29. A general ban on public demonstration by opposition parties and pro-opposition civil society actors continues to be enforced throughout the country. On 15 November, in the context of protests called by civil society groups and opposition parties, a strong deployment of FARDC and the Congolese National Police prevented public gatherings. Incidents occurred in Kinshasa, Goma, Kasindi (Beni territory, North Kivu), Matadi (Kongo Central), Kisangani (Tshopo), Kindu (Maniema) and Kananga (Kasai Central), with defence and security forces injuring at least 3 persons and arresting 77 others, including at least one woman and two children. Most of those arrested were later released, while seven remained in detention. On 18 November, Congolese National Police agents disrupted the inauguration of an opposition political party, Ensemble des volontaires pour le redressement de la République démocratique du Congo (ENVOL)/Alternance pour la République, in Kenge, Kwango Province. The National Civil Police clashed with supporters of the party. One party member was injured and four were arrested.

30. No significant progress has been achieved with regard to accountability of the defence and security forces for abuses and use of excessive force against protestors during previous demonstrations. A year after the 19 December 2016 protests, during which 40 people were killed, none of the alleged perpetrators has been brought to justice. On 4 October, in Kimpese (Kongo Central), two senior police officers were convicted for the murder of members of the Bundu Dia Kongo/Bundu Dia Mayala movement, in connection with their responsibility in the repression of a protest held in February 2017.

31. MONUSCO continued to support the Congolese authorities' efforts to address serious human rights violations and fight impunity. Following the Mission's advocacy efforts, in collaboration with the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, progress was made on some of the 38 priority cases jointly identified with military justice authorities. In Kavumu, South Kivu Province, 18 persons, including a provincial deputy, were tried for crimes against humanity for the abduction and rape of 38 girls. On 13 December, the Court handed down life sentences to 12 of the accused. The court awarded reparations to victims. MONUSCO and its partners assisted the Congolese military justice authorities in developing a prosecutorial strategy for the trial, together with a protection plan for victims and witnesses, and provided security and logistical support for the mobile court hearings.

32. Following this assistance by MONUSCO, the military justice authorities in the Kasai region began addressing cases involving alleged FARDC perpetrators, rather than focusing exclusively on armed groups. MONUSCO-supported joint investigation missions with the military justice resulted in the indictment of 13 FARDC soldiers, including a lieutenant-colonel and a major, in Kipese, North Kivu Province, who allegedly perpetrated conflict-related sexual violence against more than 300 victims. The investigation is ongoing and the military prosecutor in Beni plans to try the suspects at the military court in Beni. In September, the Operational Military Court in Beni issued its first judicial decision in relation to child recruitment.

33. The number of applications from MONUSCO and the United Nations country team to perform risk assessments in accordance with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy increased during the reporting period, partly as a consequence of country team support for Government security forces now also requiring clearance under the Policy. United Nations police set up an internal human rights due diligence policy task force to enhance observance of the Policy, particularly as regards the implementation of mitigating measures.

Sexual violence

34. Between September and November, the Mission documented 254 victims of conflict-related sexual violence, including 149 women and 66 children. Armed groups were responsible for 75 per cent of such incidents, while State agents were responsible for 25 per cent. The main perpetrators include FARDC and Bana Mura militia in the Kasai region (18 per cent of the victims) and FARDC. Sexual violence survivors still encounter limitations in holistic service provision.

Child protection

35. Through the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, MONUSCO verified 929 grave violations against children throughout the reporting period, a 34 per cent increase as compared with the previous reporting period. At least 650 children, including 177 girls, escaped or were separated from armed groups. The increasing number of surrenders by Kamuina Nsapu militia allowed the separation of several children. However, there are more than 1,700 allegations of child recruitment that have still to be verified. The main armed groups involved in the recruitment of children were the Kamuina Nsapu (339), Mai-Mai Mazembe (69), Mai-Mai Yakutumba (30) and Nduma défense du Congo-Renové (NDC-R) (24).

36. MONUSCO also documented the killing of 40 children and the maiming of 57, solely in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Kasai Central and Kasai, with more than half of these incidents (56 per cent) perpetrated by State agents. The abduction of 78 children, mostly by Mai-Mai Mazembe and ADF, and 24 attacks against schools, mostly by FARDC, Mai-Mai Mazembe and NDC-R were also verified.

III. Deployment of the Mission and implementation of its mandate

A. Support for the implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement of 31 December 2016

37. My Special Representative continued his good offices in support of the implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016, at the national level and in key provinces, with a particular focus on promoting the implementation of the confidence-building measures envisaged in the agreement and the creation of a political environment conducive to the holding of peaceful and credible elections. In this context, he met with leaders of the opposition platform known as the Groupe des sept partis politiques, the Governor of Haut-Katanga and the Governor of Tanganyika.

38. On 9 November, my Special Representative, jointly with my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Said Djinnit, met with the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Smail Chergui to discuss the coordination of those organizations'

support for the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On 13 and 14 November, in Gaborone, my Special Representative held consultations with the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and exchanged respectively with the incoming Chair of SADC, the President of Namibia, Hage Geingob, and the Special Envoy of SADC to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

39. On 14 November, a day before the demonstrations planned by civil society groups and the opposition, my Special Representative issued a statement urging the Congolese authorities to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, including the freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration, while also reiterating the need for protestors to refrain from violence.

B. Comprehensive approach to protection of civilians

40. The MONUSCO Community Alert Network transmitted an average of 570 early warning alerts per month, which constitutes a 17 per cent increase over the previous reporting period. Of the 486 alerts reported in North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika, the Government and/or MONUSCO responded to 74 per cent. Most of the alerts to which there had been no response were in areas with limited State authority or which were difficult to access.

41. MONUSCO has now concentrated two battalions of its Intervention Brigade battalions in Sake and Munigi, North Kivu, for projection throughout the country as required. The Mission has also finalized the realignment of its sectors, resulting in the establishment of four sectors covering the entire country, thus allowing for greater flexibility for redeployment of troops.

42. MONUSCO continued actions to neutralize armed groups as well as protect civilians. Overall, MONUSCO conducted 29 military operations, including temporary standing combat deployments and coordinated operations with FARDC against FDLR, ADF and FRPI, to neutralize armed groups and deter violence against the civilian population. MONUSCO also supported explosive ordnance disposal operations, through the Mine Action Service, to ensure that areas were safe for the local population, including by responding to all requests for explosive hazard management support during the reporting period.

43. In response to the massacre of 25 civilians on 7 October by suspected ADF, MONUSCO supported air access to the remote area where the incident had taken place for a joint assessment team composed of MONUSCO, local authorities, including the military prosecutor, and medical specialists to document the killings. MONUSCO also continued coordinated military operations with FARDC against ADF in the area, with support from attack helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles, to push ADF back from the positions they had taken from FARDC, within the context of the broader protection plan developed by the Mission to address the re-emerging ADF threat to the civilian population. To overcome the difficult conditions its peacekeepers face in the ADF area of operations, including poor road access, especially during the rainy season, MONUSCO has been rehabilitating a strategic road to enable improved access for military operations, access to civilian populations in need of protection and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

44. Since the attack against its peacekeepers on 7 December, the Mission has reinforced its presence at the Semuliki base with a composite task force comprising one South African platoon, two Malawian platoons and a Tanzanian special forces platoon (121 soldiers). The neighbouring Kamango base, deemed to be at potential risk, has been similarly reinforced. A section of Force engineers has been deployed in Semuliki to commence close support field engineering tasks. Additional attack

helicopter and utility helicopter assets have been positioned at Mavivi to undertake close support missions as required.

45. In South Kivu, the successful defence of Uvira by MONUSCO, alongside FARDC, from an attack by Mai-Mai Yakutumba in late September was critical for the protection of civilians and an important demonstration of the determination of MONUSCO to act to protect civilians. MONUSCO established blocking positions at the entry points to the town, succeeded in repelling an attack on the city's prison and provided support from attack helicopters, which managed to destroy the boat fleet of Mai-Mai Yakutumba. MONUSCO also communicated directly with Yakutumba, the group's leader, to dissuade him from attacking the town and made it clear that MONUSCO would act to protect civilians. Since then, MONUSCO has enhanced its engagement and liaison with local actors and communities with regard to threats to civilians in the Uvira and Fizi territories, where attacks on State institutions by Mai Mai Yakutumba remain of concern. MONUSCO is also monitoring Yakutumba's expansion into mining areas in Maniema Province, which could provide an important source of funding to the armed group, and is addressing this risk with the authorities and mining companies.

46. Following recent base closures in North Kivu, MONUSCO is implementing mitigating measures and enhancing community-based mechanisms to improve the protective environment and early warning in these areas. This engagement includes building the capacity in communities to integrate gender perspectives into mechanisms to protect civilians, increase the involvement of women in local protection committees and alert networks and, going forward, better take account of women's security needs and capabilities. MONUSCO has strengthened community engagement through joint capacity-building sessions with the Ministry of Interior of the province in all four locations where the Mission used to have bases. Rapidly deployable battalion troops established a presence in several locations in these areas to assess the security situation after the closure of the bases and to respond to protection needs. Joint actions by the Mission's civilian and military components are a tangible expression of the comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians and a step towards the implementation of the protection through projection concept.

47. During the reporting period, MONUSCO continued to support local conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly in Tanganyika Province, by establishing two additional intercommunal peace forums in Kalemie and Moba territories to promote peaceful coexistence and prevent and mitigate violence between the Bantu and Twa communities. In North Kivu, MONUSCO supported mediation efforts between the Nande and Hutu communities in Kanyabayonga and Mirangi. These efforts, supported by the Mission and led by provincial authorities, civil society and communities, contributed to a reduction in tensions. In South Kivu, following the fighting in early November among soldiers in relation to the arrest in Bukavu of Abbas Kayonga, a former rebel leader and a prominent member of the Banyamulenge community, who had integrated FARDC as a colonel, MONUSCO has continued to engage with local authorities and communities to reduce the risk of an escalation of tensions.

48. In response to the increase in attacks against prisons resulting in mass escapes of prisoners who, in some cases, have subsequently joined armed groups, MONUSCO is providing support to 14 high-risk prisons housing prisoners who, if freed, would pose a serious threat to local populations. These prisons are located in Kinshasa, North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Haut-Katanga, Tanganyika, Mongala and Kongo Central provinces. Action plans for each prison are being developed, which includes targeted advocacy with authorities to address overcrowding. Advocacy in relation to the Goma prison has already resulted in the transfer of 153 prisoners to prisons in Kinshasa and Equateur Province, as well as the transfer of 486 military prisoners to the former Goma prison, which has now been

rehabilitated. MONUSCO also successfully repelled attacks against the prisons in Uvira, South Kivu and Butembo, North Kivu.

49. MONUSCO has continued to enhance its preparedness to address political and electoral-related violence, including in urban centres. MONUSCO reviewed and, where necessary, revised its contingency plans in the electoral context in all field offices and Kinshasa. The Mission also reinforced the capacities of 384 civil society members in Kinshasa, Goma and Lubumbashi, supporting 21 civil society campaigns in promotion of a peaceful electoral process.

Disarmament, demobilization repatriation, resettlement and reintegration

50. During the reporting period, MONUSCO registered 263 surrenders from armed groups, accompanied by 176 dependants. Of these, 81 foreign ex-combatants and 154 dependants were repatriated to Rwanda within the framework of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement programme for foreign armed groups. A total of 86 Congolese combatants entered phase III of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The Mission received and transferred 76 Congolese and two foreign children associated with armed groups to partner organizations.

51. MONUSCO continued to provide logistical support to the Government-run third national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme ex-combatant reintegration camps of Kamina and Kitona. MONUSCO also continued to support 293 former combatants (including one female) and 1073 dependants (8 men, 242 women, 419 boys and 404 girls) of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) accommodated in the camps of Kanyabayonga and Walungu, as well as the Government-managed camp in Kisangani.

52. During the reporting period, 219 members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition) (SPLM/A-in Opposition) have departed MONUSCO camps for various destinations, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and the United States of America. The Mission continues to work on finding options for the relocation of the 408 SPLM/A-in Opposition remaining under MONUSCO care. The Mine Action Service ensured the destruction and disposal of weapons and ammunition surrendered by these former combatants.

53. MONUSCO is expanding community violence reduction programmes across eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with 21 reinsertion projects targeting former combatants, 12 projects targeting marginalized youth and prevention of recruitment into armed groups and 4 projects promoting community cohesion through temporary training and employment, as well as public outreach activities.

Stabilization

54. MONUSCO supported the launch of two stabilization programmes in South Kivu Province during the reporting period, as part of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. In total, five such programmes are now operational in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, all financed through the Stabilization Coherence Fund, with a budget amounting to $21 million, 15 per cent of which is dedicated to gender mainstreaming.

55. MONUSCO also supported the establishment of a stabilization committee in south Irumu territory, Ituri Province. The committee is composed of local and national political actors, community leaders, civil society and women's organizations. Its objective is to help reduce the threat posed by FRPI, a local armed group, and resolve long-standing conflicts between local communities.

C. Assessment of the performance of uniformed Mission personnel in protecting civilians

56. During the reporting period, the Mission continued to monitor and evaluate on a regular basis the performance of the force, with a view to identifying areas requiring improvement. MONUSCO will continue to work closely with troop-contributing countries on this issue and will continue to update the Security Council on the matter.

57. A majority of the formed police units were found to be operationally ready and appropriately trained and overall performed well. The most recent monthly evaluation showed that some units continue to operate with unserviceable or expired equipment. The Mission is actively following up with police-contributing countries to address the issue.

D. Assessment of the Mission's gender responsiveness

58. During the reporting period, MONUSCO introduced the use of gender markers to assess the Mission's responsiveness to the needs of the female populations across its mandate priorities, in line with delivery on the women and peace and security mandate. The first data show that 78 per cent of MONUSCO sections and offices have developed gender-based analysis and 65 per cent have redirected their activities to benefit more and more women and girls.

59. Responding to the system-wide strategy on gender parity launched in September by the Secretary-General, the Special Representative, Maman Sidikou has issued a gender parity directive for MONUSCO, with a plan to bridge the parity gap and increase the proportion of women among international staff from, currently, 28 per cent to 34 per cent at the end of the cycle.

E. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

60. MONUSCO continued to implement a robust victim centred strategy in enforcing the United Nations zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. Three allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded during the reporting period. Two of these allegations involved minors. In total, 18 allegations were reported from January to early December 2017.

61. Community-based complaint networks have remained pivotal in the Mission's response in the areas of prevention, enforcement and remedial action. These networks, established in areas where the Mission has a significant presence, comprise 500 members, of whom 65 per cent are women. In coordination with service providers including the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund, the Mission has also strengthened the victims' assistance protocol to ensure that all victims are supported within 24 to 72 hours of receipt of an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse.

IV. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

62. During the reporting period, 155 security- and safety-related incidents affecting United Nations staff, uniformed components, assets and operations, as well as international non-governmental organizations have been reported, as compared with 75 such incidents documented during the previous reporting period. These include 83 crime-related incidents; 12 cases linked to civil unrest, 45 hazard-related cases and

15 incidents documented in connection with armed conflict. The Mine Action Service delivered risk education on explosive hazards to 192 United Nations personnel.

V. Observations

63. A year ago, the signing of the landmark Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement on 31 December 2016 gave renewed hope to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A year later these hopes are yet to be realized. After being postponed once, in late 2016, the presidential and legislative elections that were meant to take place by the end of 2017, in accordance with the agreement of 31 December 2016, have once again been postponed, until 23 December 2018. I regret that the holding of these crucial elections, set to pave the way for the first ever peaceful transfer of power in the history of the country, has been delayed yet again. I nevertheless welcome the publication, on 5 November, of an electoral calendar by the Independent National Electoral Commission. I urge the Commission to abide by its calendar and spare no effort in finalizing the voter register, which has already fallen behind schedule, as soon as possible. The completion of this critical milestone should be promptly followed by the swift implementation of the other steps outlined in the calendar. I reiterate the readiness of MONUSCO and the United Nations system as a whole, in close coordination with the African Union, the European Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Southern African Development Community and other partners, to continue to support the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in holding these elections.

64. In the current, politically polarized climate, there is a real risk that plans for the holding of the long-awaited polls could be derailed once again. In the absence of a genuine commitment by all parties concerned to work towards the holding of free, fair and credible elections, each passing day increases this risk. I call on all actors to work together to implement the agreement of 31 December 2016, which remains the only viable path out of the current political impasse. More than ever, the constructive engagement of all key stakeholders is needed to salvage the agreement.

65. I urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to do its utmost to steer the political transition towards a successful conclusion. I take note of its stated commitment to do so and of the positive steps it has taken in recent weeks by submitting to the parliament a bill to revise the electoral law and a budget for elections. I welcome the parliament's swift adoption of these laws. Beyond these steps, I encourage the Government to ensure that the Independent National Electoral Commission receives the financial support that it has been promised and to take the lead in devising and implementing a plan for the security of the elections. Once again, I call on the Government to lead the way in the implementation of the confidence-building measures envisaged in the agreement of 31 December 2016. I am concerned that no real progress has been achieved in this regard, as 107 political prisoners remain in detention and the harassment of political actors and civil society figures persists. No credible electoral process is possible in a context of harassment and repression. I welcome the decision of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process to seek a solution to this fundamental issue and to contribute to a political climate conducive to credible elections.

66. At the same time, I am concerned by the consistent rejection by key opposition leaders of any engagement with the political process. If the voices that these leaders claim to represent are to be heard, they must be part of the solution. I call on them to regain the spirit of dialogue and compromise that led them to sign the agreement of

31 December 2016. Now is the time to heed the call of their people for peaceful, free, fair and credible elections.

67. I call on the international community to maintain a coordinated approach in support of the full implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016 to pave the way for elections. Regional partners and bilateral actors all have a vital contribution to make at this crucial juncture for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I take note of the consensus among international partners to support the electoral calendar. The coordinated support of the international community will be even more crucial in the coming months.

68. The precarious security situation prevailing in some parts of the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a source of deep concern. Against the backdrop of a deeply divided political landscape, armed groups in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have grown bolder. Attacks against security forces persist as armed groups form coalitions. This worrying trend must be addressed, principally through political means. I condemn the renewed attacks of the ADF armed group in North Kivu, including the killing of 25 civilians in November, the first since January 2017.

69. I reiterate my strong condemnation of the attacks against MONUSCO peacekeepers by armed groups, particularly ADF, which led to the killing of one peacekeeper in September, three peacekeepers in October and 15 in December, all from Tanzania. I renew my condolences to the Government and people of Tanzania for their loss. These attacks against peacekeepers are unacceptable. Heinous as they are, they will not deter the determination of the United Nations to continue assisting the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I call on the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to open investigations and bring the perpetrators to justice. In the meantime, I have decided to launch a special investigation to determine, with the participation of the Tanzanian authorities, the circumstances surrounding this attack and identify concrete measures required to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and ensure that the MONUSCO Force is optimally configured, equipped and trained to address the continued threat posed by ADF and other armed groups.

70. The safety of United Nations peacekeepers and other United Nations personnel is fundamental to the very concept of the United Nations. Following this dramatic incident, I have asked the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to urgently develop an action plan to enhance the safety and security of our peacekeepers in the implementation of their mandate.

71. I am deeply concerned that human rights violations and abuses continue to increase. The number of human rights violations perpetrated by State security forces is constantly rising. Over a year after a series of deadly clashes between protesters and security forces in relation to the holding of elections, none of the alleged perpetrators has been brought to justice. I urge the authorities to ensure accountability and bring all perpetrators to justice regardless of their affiliation or rank within the security forces. On a positive note, I welcome the end of the trial on 13 December for the rape of 38 girls which resulted in the sentencing of 12 of the accused to life sentences. This step against impunity is encouraging and must be followed by others.

72. I remain deeply distressed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation, which is expected to worsen further in coming months. I call on the Government to do its utmost to ensure a safe and secure environment for the population and I urge the donor community to extend its assistance to those in need.

73. I would like to thank my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Maman Sidikou, who completes his assignment in January 2018. I am

grateful for his leadership and dedication during his tenure. I would also like to thank all the personnel of MONUSCO and the United Nations country team for their tireless efforts under very challenging circumstances. In particular, I wish to highlight the bravery and determination of MONUSCO military and civilian personnel. I pay particular homage to the Tanzanian contingent, which has lost 18 of its soldiers in North Kivu Province since September. My deep appreciation also goes to the countries contributing troops and police to MONUSCO, to donor countries and to the regional and multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations that have continued to provide invaluable support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MONUSCO
December 2017
MONUSCO Headquarters
Force Forward Headquarters
Brigade Headquarters
Sector Headquarters
Formed Police Unit
Logistics base
Military Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
SOUTH SUDAN
UGANDA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
RWANDA
BURUNDI
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
ANGOLA
CONGO
Bangui
Kinshasa
Brazzaville
Luanda
Lusaka
Kampala
Kigali
Bujumbura
Dodoma
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